

INSIDE

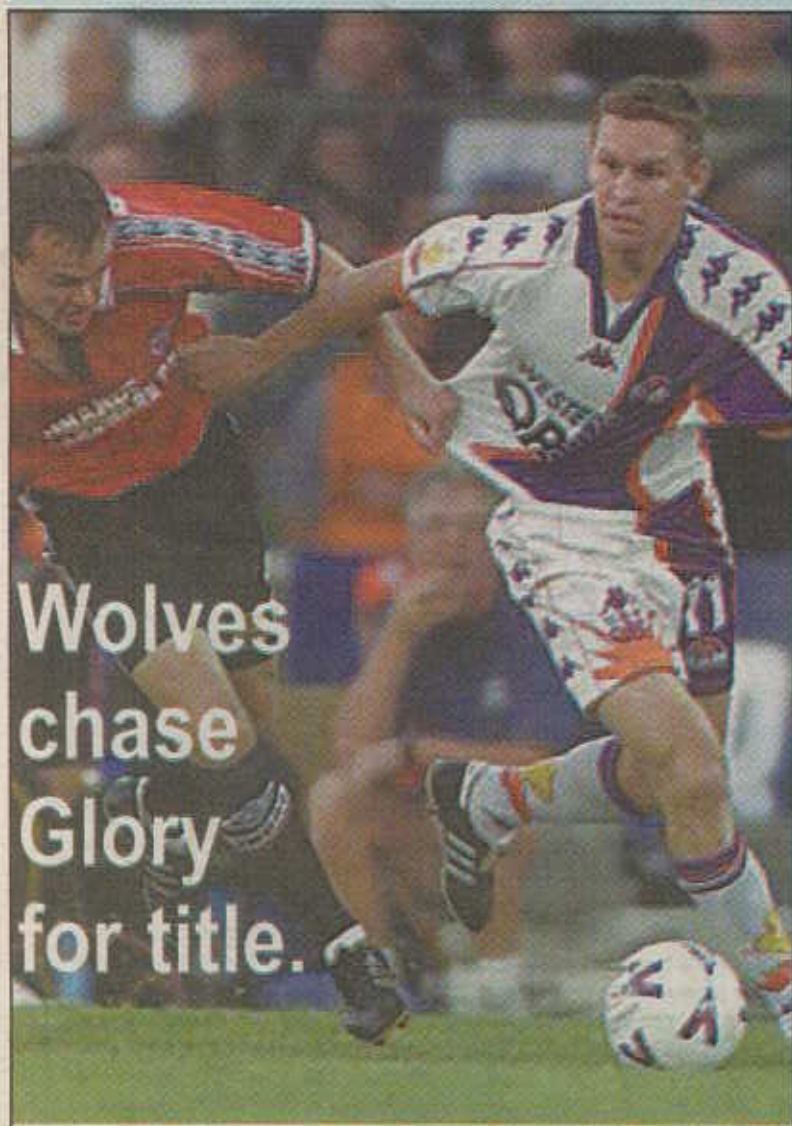
Your quality Australian weekly soccer paper for the new millennium

SOCCER

Registered with Australia Post as a publication PP224696/00050 - ISSN 1321-8980

May 9, 2000. \$3.00

Glorymania hits soccer-mad Perth



**Wolves
chase
Glory
for title.**

By Aidan Ormond

It's official. Perth is now soccer crazy. It may not have been pretty, and there were times in the second half when fellow boom club Northern Spirit looked capable of spoiling the party, but Perth Glory's eventual 1-0 final round win courtesy of Jamie Harnwell's header sparked yet more Glorymania in the media, not to mention the streets, of the WA capital.

Coach Bernd Stange - the man at the centre of it all - said before the game he would celebrate with a bottle of champagne after winning the minor premiership - this he did together with his devoted fans, as he reflected on being the best in the land over 34 NSL rounds, finishing four points clear of Wollongong.

And don't the media love Stange. *Inside Soccer's* man in Perth, Dennis Gedling, saw five TV camera crews plus a posse of photographers followed Stange's every move after the game. The Members bar was packed later with at least 500 excited fans, including The Shed contingent.

And Glory management gave away 20 bottles of champagne with virtually all and sundry receiving a champagne soaking. The men from The Shed then hoisted Bernd Stange above and carried the charismatic German around the room chanting "Bernd Stange's Glory army."

Yesterday morning West Australians awoke to see a front page photo in *The West Australian* with a back page feature devoted to Glory, while it was a lead on nearly all the TV news bulletins.

Even commercial radio stations were talking Glory. And to think this club is only four years old. Potentially, Perth will have five weeks of

Glorymania sweeping through the West Australian capital.

And Glory has firmed as favourite to win the grand final with the 43,000 Subiaco Oval primed for an onslaught of fans in purple, while on the park Young Socceroo Ljubo Milicevic, wingback Robbie Trajkovski, defender Jamie Harnwell, and Gareth Naven are in ominous form.

Certainly Milicevic's emergence has given Stange options he didn't have before. With the former AIS graduate Glory has a composed look playing out from the back.

Standing in the way of Glory is Wollongong and Adelaide City. Wolves will host Glory on May 21 in the first leg of the Major Semi Final.

Wolves will be no easy task. The league's free-scorers (72 goals) will be rested and itching for revenge after a loss in the penultimate home and away round. An expected 15,000 is tipped to pack Brandon Park. If the game is anything like their last encounter fans will be in for a rare treat.

And Adelaide City have the quality to make it to the grand final; there is no side in Australia - Glory included - that would like Zoran Matic's side in the opposing corner. The Zebs are a genuine threat, having shown before they can win in an away grand final.

The composition of the final six has an interesting mix of clubs and cities. Five cities are represented - including a regional centre - with two of the top three clubs relatively new to NSL football, while spots four to six are filled by clubs with a rich tradition in the game.

Continued on page three

NSL Finals time

We've got it covered with all the stats and news leading into the business end of the season.

Greg Blake with Ange Postecoglou

South's loyal servant reflects on his life at the club and his future at national level.

Plus win a Real Pack (right) worth \$250



Crooky

After a year we would rather forget Northern Spirit finished with a strong performance against Perth Glory, making them fight all the way to take out the Minor Premiership with a 1-0 victory.

We went to Perth Oval determined to make Perth fight every inch and we did just that. In fact I thought we deserved to win the match.

It was ironic that it took such a big match and a big crowd to make us come out of our shells, considering the 14,000 people at Perth Oval was exactly what we were accustomed to at North Sydney Oval.

After the match I couldn't help but think back to what we had last year at our last home match when 17,000 people packed North Sydney Oval to watch us go to battle with Marconi.

Those days seem like years ago but all we have to do is play like we did against Perth, get some results and we can have that all over again.

Don't get me wrong. We all know we have a big job ahead of us - on and off the field - in the off-season to get back to where we were before this season.

Off the park, our deal with Glasgow Rangers is in the final stages and it looks as though we are going to have some stability and serious financial clout behind us from this point on.

As far as playing staff is concerned, Amie has already been speaking to plenty of player about coming to North Sydney Oval

and with the excitement surrounding the link with Rangers we are finding players are more than happy to take.

As far as existing players are concerned we will be making a decision in the next week or so about who will stay and who will go but every player who stays with the club will be given a program to work through in the off season.



Every player has a different program, designed to make sure we all improve on our fitness levels to gain maximum performance next season.

After two more weeks of training, Amie has given us until August as an off season but Spirit fans can be certain that we will be back ready to go at that time.

While we are on "holidays" we will have to come back at regular intervals to have fitness and body fat tests to make sure we don't enjoy too much of the good life.

In saying that, a good rest is imperative so we come back in August refreshed and ready for the challenges that lie ahead.

We all know those challenges are tough but Northern Spirit is determined to put the nightmare that was this season behind us and come back bigger and better than ever in 2000/2001.

Good luck to the teams remaining in the playoffs!

Ian Crook,
Northern Spirit and England

S-news

Inside Soccer's
Australian news,
stories
and goss

MYSTERY GIG FOR 'ROOS

S-news believes that while it's "all systems go" as far as Paraguay is concerned, with even the charismatic Jose Luis Chilavert believed to be confirmed as a 'starter', the final go-ahead to the series has not yet been agreed between Soccer Australia and marketing partners, IEC, at the time of going to print. This is even though the games are supposed to be held in a little over four weeks. With most of our OS-based players presumably making holiday plans by now, this delay must be difficult for national coach, Frank Farina, as well as the players with Farina possibly requiring them for almost the whole month of June for a home series, and the Oceania Cup in Tahiti later in June. S News can just imagine the conversations between the coach and his overseas based players: "Look, we will need you to play, but I don't know when and I'm not sure where and I don't know who against. But it will be in four weeks time." Good luck from S News, Frank.

PSST, WANNA BUY AN AUSTRALIAN CLUB?

S-news' colleagues in Italy swear they saw Carlton owner Peter Jess trying to sell Carlton local identities. And former Carlton boss Lou Sticca is now involved in player management, having signed up three players, including a brother act playing for two of Victoria's smaller NSL clubs.

WOLVES BEAT RUGBY LEAGUE

An interesting little stat: Wolves v Glory drew 3,851 to Brandon Park. St George Illawarra Dragons v Auckland at WIN stadium was seen by 7,039 fans. Ergo it's official. Soccer rules in the 'Gong and Scott Chipperfield is 'The Man'.

'ROO THROUGH AND THROUGH?

Reports recently suggested that Leeds United's Brad Groves was being pressured into pledging his allegiance to England. One can only hope that the talented young Aussie is true to his word when he said over 12 months ago to IS editor Aidan Ormond that to pull on the green and gold was the ultimate for him. Fortunately Groves was part of the Joeys '99 campaign, which means he definitely can't play for anyone else, doesn't it?

WELL DONE SOUTH AND TRIMMERS

It was pretty emotional on Sunday at Bob Jane Stadium. Postecoglou's final game for the club he has served for the best part of his adult life and Paul Trimble's 350th game. Trimmers is also the first player in NSL history to play 350 games and score 100 goals. On top of that young James Verlander, a member of the Trimmers Club, and who suffers from severe illness problems, was a special guest in the corporate box with his family after his heartfelt plea to see South play during the recent Good Friday Appeal on Channel 7. Young James was also mascot of the day and tossed the coin for the respective captains.

HOW TO SAVE ON ELECTRICITY

The USA women's side, soon to be in Australia and featuring superstar Mia Hamm, travel to Norway for two matches, including a "Midnight Sun" game on July 27 in Tromsø, located in the far northern part of the country just below the 70th parallel. The North Pole is at 90 degrees latitude. The match is set to kickoff at 10:30 p.m. local time, and due almost around-the-clock daylight during that time of the year, stadium lights will not be needed.

HOW TO SCORE PENALTIES

How about this for the strangest penalty. In the NZ game Central v Nelson Scott Lindenburg swore blind this happened. 'Menapi placed the ball on the spot and prepared to take the kick. He seemed to then go into the position swimmers assume on the starting blocks; bent forward, arms out in front as if he was about to dive into the water... Menapi seemed to move left, right, left, right and the resulting kick left

Nicholson in goal, and I would imagine most others, still guessing. It was the weirdest and most effective penalty I have ever seen.' And how about this for a quote: 'Geoff Hurst is more popular today than he was in 1966,' from a recent Oceania press release. Yes we thought it was bollocks too. Both gems from Sitter! Fanzine in NZ (see ad in this issue.)

JUNE 11 TRIPLE TREAT?

June 11 is looming as a massive day for football. At this stage it is possible the Socceroos v Paraguay, the Matildas against Mia Hamm's USA and the NSL Grand Final will be played on this day, all potentially in NSW! Let's hope there is some maneuvering so we can maximize the coverage of all three games.

OAKLEY A COACH TO WATCH

Jane Oakley, the former Matildas star, has recently been selected as the Victorian State U/16 Boys State Team Coach. The team will be competing in the U/16 National Talent Identification Championships - the first "shop window" for new Australian U/17 and U/20 coach Ange Postecoglou. It is the first time that there has been a female coach at these championships. Oakley is also coaching the Australian U/17 Women's side in the upcoming Adidas Cup in Houston, Texas (see story on page seven.)

FREE MOVIE TICKETS

This is the last week you can pick up a free double pass to see the movie 'The Cup'. Just send to our PO Box a stamped self-addressed envelope and we'll send you an in-season double pass.

SOCCER ON THE RISE IN NZ

According to the government funded Hilary Commission, a survey of NZ schools says that soccer and rugby league is now outstripping the popularity of union for the first time.

BABY FOR BOBBY

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Bobby Despotovski who have had their first child, son Kristian. Will there be another celebration in their household after June 11?

SWANNING AROUND

Wendi Henderson, New Zealand's Player of the Year and Players' Player of the Year in 1999, succeeds Terry McCall as captain of the SWANZ for the upcoming Pacific Cup in Australia (see page six.) There are a number of other noteworthy selections. Two players, Simone Ferrara and Rebecca Smith, are New Zealand citizens from the USA. The former plays for the country's leading club side, Three Kings United, while the latter plays for Duke University. Vicki Ormond's selection sees her following in the footsteps of her father, Duncan, who played eight times for New Zealand. Meanwhile, Tarah Cox's selection completes a tremendous family achievement, with her mother, Barbara Cox, being a former SWANZ captain, and sister Michele not selected for this tournament, as she is recovering from knee surgery. And Yvonne Vale's return to the international stage follows a thirty-month absence at this level, due to the demands of motherhood. And former Sydney Olympic defender Ricki Herbert has been appointed full-time director of coaching for Federation 2 in NZ's fledgling federation structure, which was launched last week under the name 'Soccer 2 - the Power of two'. Hopefully it will be more influential than the 'Soccer 21' document here in Australia, which is currently suffering from deprived relevancy syndrome.

CATLIN LEGEND NOW IN NZ

Following their visit last weekend, some Kingz fans are now in possession of the Bob Catlin 'Rookwood Cemetery' T-shirt, one of the more popular sellers at Breakers Stadium's 'Jersey Joint'. And you can expect to see at least one Sydney fan proudly wearing his Football Kingz jersey with Rufer and number 7 on his back, a gift from said NZ fans. Ahhh, that's nice.

INSIDE SOCCER

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Publisher: Inside Soccer Pty Ltd
A.C.N. 088 107 822

Printing: Apex Printers Arncliffe NSW Tel: (02) 9597 6866
Distribution: Wrapaway, Marrickville NSW Tel: (02) 9550 1622

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Continued from front page

This finals series is perhaps a perfect metaphor for where our game is right now.

Finally a word about Newcastle Breakers. When coach Lee Sterrey (pictured) took over he had one overall aim: to win back national respect for a club that was a perennial easybeat. This he has done.

Newcastle is now an admired footballing outfit with the fans and stadium to match.

Yet to have gone so close to a spot in the elite, particularly this season, seems, well, so unfair.

And without the extra games played as a result of the Adelaide Sharks dropping out Breakers would have finished in the six ahead of Olympic (see table on this page.)

Cold comfort indeed for their wonderful fans.

Breakers were the feel good story of the year, the Aussie battlers from the regions finally emerging to shake up the glamour boys from the cities. Buonavoglia, Sprod, Harper, Moore, Owens, Roberts and Catlin, the names became genuine hometown heroes.

They were even on top of the league at one point.

Now, all they have to look forward to is another painfully long off-season.



It's do or die time: Elimination Finals first leg previews

Branko Culina is a positive man, so he'll probably stay away from the negatives. Yet he must be tempted to introduce 'the revenge factor' into Olympic's preparations for leg one of the Elimination Final this Sunday.

Last year it was Adelaide City who knocked his side off - somewhat controversially - in the final home and away round. Controversial because the Olympic players were adamant that an infringement had occurred on their keeper when Alex Tobin's looping header from just inside the box off a corner sailed in, taking with it Olympic's play-off hopes.

Olympic slinked back into town muttering under their breath something about revenge. Of course 12 months later much of that talk has been forgotten, but I'm sure Culina will be keen to remind his exciting side the importance of 'gettin' even' for that day.

The good news for Culina is that the reliable Baillie, exciting Wilson and livewire Goutzioulis should be back, and with no suspensions from the 3-0 win game against United at Belmore on Sunday, he should have a full squad to choose from.

The bad news however is history. If you see Greg Blake's exclusive stats on page 27, the Zebs have played the most Elimination Finals (8) of any other club. And what is even more alarming is that they have won 'the big prize' twice in the 90s after having come from the back of the pack at the Elimination Final stage.

No other side in history has done this twice.

And if that wasn't enough to put the wind up Olympic, Adelaide City Force is in the finest form of any of

the top six sides. Comparisons to a juggernaut would not be off the mark.

Olympic will hope to win, and win well, in Sydney because I'm told 15,000 plus will pack the refurbished Hindmarsh for the return leg.

This will be a wonderful two games of football. Gee I love the Finals.

Aidan Ormond

Eddie Krncevic returns to the place where his coaching career started. A last round draw at Canberra relegated his Marconi Stallions to sixth position and the prospect of facing the club he coached last year, Carlton.

Although on paper Marconi would be happy to avoid the in-form Adelaide City Force it is hard to see Marconi overcoming Carlton taking into account recent form.

The team has been relying on second half comebacks in recent games and although they were able to achieve home victories over both Gippsland Falcons and Perth Glory after falling behind early, they weren't able to escape against Adelaide City in the last home game.

They again came back after being two goals down early in the game but the resolute Force team hit them with another two goals in the second half to kill off Marconi's top two ambition.

The star of their recent

games has been the speedy Zeljko Babic who had scored seven goals in eight games prior to the last game against Canberra.

His injury late in the first half of the Force game could be a severe blow to the Marconi side. Without his electrifying pace Krncevic's team is bereft of attacking options.

Suffering a hamstring strain that has bothered him for most of the season Babic is in severe doubt for the first leg and may be put in cotton wool until the second game.

Captain Brad Maloney's recent return to the starting line-up has seen him score two goals in two games and he will need to continue his goal scoring form, particularly if Babic is out.

Carlton, on the other hand, come into this game toughened up.

They have had a hard run home that included two games against last year's champions, South Melbourne, as well as games against Newcastle and Wollongong Wolves.

The return of Olyroo Simon Colosimo has added attacking thrust and skill to the team.

Playing a free role from a right wing back position Colosimo hasn't taken long to get into form after his long injury lay off.

He is set to play a major role in the finals series and with much greater squad depth than Marconi Stuart Munro's side is favoured to advance to the next stage.

John Vrtaric

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
Perth Glory	30	17	7	6	51	37	58	+14
Wollongong Wolves	30	16	7	7	64	34	55	+30
Adelaide City	30	14	8	8	51	33	50	+18
Carlton	30	14	7	9	46	37	49	+9
Marconi Stallions	30	14	7	9	48	44	49	+4
Newcastle Breakers	30	13	8	9	41	36	47	+5
Brisbane Strikers	30	12	9	9	43	36	45	+7
Sydney Olympic	30	13	6	11	38	39	45	-1
Football Kingz	30	13	4	12	46	49	43	-3
South Melbourne	30	12	6	12	52	43	42	+9
Parramatta Power	30	12	3	14	44	40	39	+4
Melbourne Knights	30	11	5	14	37	49	38	-12
Canberra Cosmos	30	9	9	12	40	49	36	-9
Northern Spirit	30	9	2	19	36	54	29	-18
Gippsland Falcons	30	6	6	18	20	46	24	-26
Sydney United	30	5	4	21	16	47	19	-31

*NSL table had it not been for extra games played to accommodate Adelaide Sharks' exit.

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GREG BLAKE
C7 SOCCER COMMENTATOR
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I don't know whether to pity or pillory the poor, dodderly old bean-counter at Carlton who appears to insist that little or no publicity is actually good publicity.

For the umpteenth time in recorded club history Carlton has chucked a hissy fit about C7 (Optus Vision) coverage of a home game; this time the much-publicised final regular season round encounter with high-flying Wollongong last weekend.

Nah, said Carlton, you can't bring the cameras in again.

Spouting the old line about being in breach of the league's agreement with the network regarding the maximum number of live club games (two) which can be covered over the course of the season, they decreed no coverage of what was probably as big as any of the round 34 NSL match-ups.

Unbelievably, the experimental Victorian club which currently struggles to entice seagulls to the tip, isn't arguing that C7 hasn't reached its Carlton quota.

No, Carlton insisted the C7 cameras went elsewhere because the network had exceeded the magic number.

Good lord, they might as well play behind closed doors; the difference at the Carlton turnstiles would hardly be noticed.

Good folks, apparently Carlton still doesn't believe it requires any added exposure; although their reluctance turned into a bonus for Breakers fans as South Melbourne, despite the short notice, once-again welcomed the C7 crew at nearby Bob Jane Stadium.

That the TV schedule, which was drawn up weeks ago, included this final Carlton game which was always shaping as the only all-top six battle of the final NSL regular season round was of no matter to the Melbourne club.

Although, to be fair to the club, the last round TV scheduling was only agreed last Monday.

No did it care that publicity for the TV coverage had well and truly been written in stone.

Oh, and Wollongong fans hoping to catch a glimpse of a rare minor premiership-winning 90 minutes, you can apparently get stuffed too.

No doubt TV sports moguls and their advisors (and this will probably shock Carlton, I'll wager), all whom have no doubt actually had this TV issue thoroughly and professionally researched, would be doubled up and gagging with laughter at the quaint old-world theories which continue to dog the three-year old NSL club at every turn.

And that's on the rather flimsy premise that they've even heard of Carlton - which, of course, they are indeed unlikely to do if the club maintains this bizarre stance.

The likes of NBC, CBS and SKY Television, or officials from, say, the AFL are all bodies which discovered way back when the Bay City Rollers last toured that live coverage is actually about as handy a promotional tool and low-outlay ally as they are likely to be gifted in the foreseeable future.

At the same time as your local basketball, netball or bloody angling competitions would joyfully whip off their strides and play buck-naked if it meant national TV exposure, here's sagely and hugely popular Carlton club telling the tellie boys and girls to get nicked.

And not once, but over and over again.

No doubt Carlton - the club which started with a whimper (admittedly a promising and ambitious one) and has actually managed to nearly halve its average gates over three years - will argue, otherwise.

Probably ill-advisedly.

Hey, isn't this the same mob who gave us the bizarre back to Olympic Park initiative this season; hasn't that kick-started the club, or what?

Remember, they persisted with this despite every man and his dog warning Carlton well in advance that the move was destined to fail.

There are some terrific, determined and hard-working people at Carlton, but I'd not be putting my hard-earned on this club ever actually thriving based on a track record of what hindsight tells us is a modest track record, the scales weighing heavily towards the succession of well-intentioned but often seriously flawed decisions, as opposed to the successes of initiatives like the wonderful 'feeder' club concept.

Worse still, Carlton have been leading the



Despite signing a bona fide international class player like Dave McPherson, and finishing in the finals two out of their three years, Carlton still cannot seem to pull a crowd to Olympic Park, Cable TV or no Cable TV.

crusade against live TV forever, with their mostly ill-informed and very persistent public bleating no doubt influencing several leading figures from other clubs to step forward and blame the medium for all their box-office ills.

And for as long as they keep looking in the wrong places for answers the very real problems which do plague the NSL and member clubs are unlikely to be addressed seriously.

It is possible to fingertip literally dozens of pages of NSL data from recent years (all of which, by the way, has been forwarded to Carlton for reference) which validates the concept that live TV cover does minimal if any harm at the box office on NSL match days.

Present a decent product and it is likely to tack some extra bums on seats; well-documented research states most emphatically.

Which must make the work in the shop window done by coach, Stuart Munro, and his coaching staff all the more disheartening.

They put together a vibrant, attractive and contending football team top-soiled with some pedigree imports and top of the range local blokes as obvious drawcard material, yet even pulsating home wins are often greeted by a rousing chorus of chirping crickets, the hum of distant traffic and the rustle of empty paper cups blowing across empty terracing.

I could seriously bore you comatose by reeling off a succession of figures which might convince most everyone - but Carlton, no doubt - that this perceived spectre of TV's evils is fantasy land material.

Instead I'll make it topical and simple.

Carlton has had six home games covered by live television this season with no tangible box office gains or losses against the club's overall season averages.

That's with a winning team.

Wollongong has also been winning but can proudly boast club record home gates over the course of season 1999/2000; now is that despite or possibly because the Wolves had seven of their home games (Note to Carlton; that's in breach of the TV agreement) beamed out live around the nation?

A similarly winning Newcastle has also played to club record home gates at Breakers Stadium this summer, yet the Breakers offered us eight live home games (Note to Carlton; is this is way over the quota or what?).

Carlton hosted South Melbourne in wretched weather at their Jurassic Park home scorned by the soccer public in round 30 this season and drew around 4,300 for the fixture.

That game was live on C7.

On the far more palatable Anzac Day public holiday the same fixture at the same venue drew just on 5,000.

No TV that day.

Admittedly there are other factors in the

equation, although the argument that South Melbourne's season was over by the second fixture is easily balanced by the crappy weather and that peak hour exhaust-fest around the venue on a Friday night discouraging an equal number from attending that first game.

Ultimately the difference was probably around 700 paying customers.

And the stark reality is that any club seriously quibbling about a difference of 700-odd through the gate ought more be concerned with a lesson or two in thin ice skating.

They will come in handy, sooner or later.

And I can recommend a good therapist for any club marketing arm which does not start salivating at the prospect of ANY national television exposure being gratefully grasped.

I've no doubt Carlton shirt sponsor, the corporate giants from Amex, will be tickled-pink to know their message once again went out to the entire thousand or so Carlton die-hards who braved the barren 20,000-capacity Olympic Park last Sunday, rather than a national TV audience.

"Hey, but we did grab an extra 700 at the gate," the club offers as compensation, all the while broadly beaming at such heady success.

The last time Carlton was taken to task on this time-wasting and ultimately extremely damaging anti-television witch hunt I was howled down with taunts of vested-interest, on the basis that I am employed by C7.

Understand please that I am employed by C7 regardless of whether I cover Carlton or, as was the case last Sunday, South Melbourne instead.

As part of the industry the success of the Carlton's and the Parramatta's and such is ultimately my only vested interest; thus I have no intention of allowing any club to die through sheer stupidity.

And stupid is what Carlton is being if it doesn't accept the 21st century reality of television interest in your particular product being something you nurture and encourage; garnish liberally through cooperation and regular liaison and add some bloody French kisses, if need be.

Because you'll be kissing your arse goodbye instead should our TV mates suddenly lose interest and the NSL file is tossed into the little round basket with a plastic liner.

Carlton is kidding itself if they don't believe that in the world of television you are past history before you know you're even out of a job.

I reckon top priority for the worry beads should more likely be an increasingly worried club administration which is running out of time and ideas and becoming more prone to knee-jerk reactions and hasty scape-goating.

Brrrrring...brrrrring...brrrrring...

Reality waits patiently on the line for

COMING SOON



WALTER ARDONE
(left) tells Daniela
all about his life,
plus the VIS' Ernie
Merrick on the
grooming of our future inter-
national stars.

SKY and Rufers for next season

In good news for Kingz fans, SKY Television has announced that its agreement to acquire an 80% interest in the Football Kingz has become unconditional.

Nate Smith, SKY's Chief Executive Officer stated that he not only was pleased to confirm the agreement but also to announce that Wynton and Shane Ruffer have been retained for the 2000/2001 season.

Other players believed to be on contract for next season are Ngata, Jackson, Van Steeden and Batty. NZ international Scott Smith is said to be out of contract at Woking, although it is not clear if he is on the Kingz shopping list.

Chris Turner, Chairman of the Football Kingz said, "I'm delighted for both the organisation and the game's sake that everything has been finalised."

Smith added: "SKY and the Kingz look forward to working with NZ Soccer, Soccer Australia, and the Oceania arm of FIFA to raise the profile of the sport in the region."

"However, top priority now becomes hiring a CEO, which we will begin work on immediately."

"Making full use of SKY's future interactive capabilities to increase interest, viewership and attendance will make this position a very exciting one."

Dignified goodbye from South legend

By Greg Blake

You'd like to say that there wasn't a dry eye in the house down lakeside way last Sunday.

Actually there were plenty, but let's not spoil one of the feel-good story outcomes of the season with specifics.

In what is often a quite savage domestic competition environment - particularly for coaches - Ange Postecoglou's polite, fuss-free and remarkably timely exit from the Bob Jane Stadium should be greeted with glee and smiles all round.

An exceedingly rare win/win conclusion to a situation which once threatened to sully reputations and dull the lustre of three quite marvelous - and one not so joyful - seasons shared by club and faithful servant.

Postecoglou (right) now saunters to promotion within the national coaching scheme; yes kids, nice guys don't always run last.

South Melbourne is no longer torn by the pro and - until recently - particularly vocal anti-Postecoglou factions.

No contractual pay-outs, no ushering in of potential replacements under the cloak of darkness and no public justification required for what may have become an ugly public axing.

Instead the club generously releases him from the remaining two years of his contract and Postecoglou walks tall and proud into the sunset.

Short-listed but never (off the record, wink, wink) officially considered a serious candidate for the senior Socceroo vacancy last year, the 34-year old deserves his foot in the national door.

"This is the first time in 20 years that this job has come up and I may never get the opportunity to be head of the queue again," he said on the announcement of his appointment.

"Of course I'm pleased and delighted with the opportunity that has been presented to me (as

Young Socceroo coach).

"It has always been an ambition of mine to join the national set-up and I hope that I can really make a contribution."

"It's a challenge I look forward to."

The graceful dignity which exemplified Postecoglou's public manner during his 127-game, dual-championship reign lingered until the very end.

Late last Sunday night the career South Melbourne champ quietly slipped out of the blue and white and into the green and gold, but not without some final glowing tributes.

The emotional ties which have bound Postecoglou to the club since childhood suggests no lack of sincerity as he bade an emotional public farewell in the days prior to his curtain call against Newcastle.

"It is going to be a tough last day for me," Postecoglou explained.

"This place has been my life since I was eight and I almost feel like the dressing room is kind of mine."

"It's not an easy place to leave because I felt so emotionally attached to the club and because I felt I was only halfway through what I wanted to achieve."

Ironically - then again not, if you've been on the NSL beat for a time - even one of Postecoglou's harshest (also off the record, of course) critics in recent times shed what appeared to be tears of the non-crocodile variety.

It seems the vultures have been sated; albeit by default.

"In the end he brought us two championships, and I'm glad he's been rewarded in such a manner," declared one.

"That's all I have to say except to wish him well."

I'm sure the above-quoted will not mind me mentioning that both he and his ilk were not quite as generous as they bayed for Postecoglou's sacrificial blood as the South Melbourne's 'three-peat' dream season started into its tail-spin in December.

No shocks though as Postecoglou staunchly defends his methods, his players and, well, HIS club one last time.

"I had specific policies from day one and my main aim was always to lay some solid foundations for the club," Postecoglou said.

"I am sorry that some people look only in the short term and not at the overall picture, but I have maintained my own policies as coach of the club and I stand by them."

"We didn't have a great year, that's fairly evident, but I did what I believe was

right.

"They (the players) haven't let me down, although probably 80 percent of them under-achieved this season."

"Yet those same players performed beyond those expectations in Brazil during the World Club Championships."

"In retrospect (going to Brazil) was definitely the turning point of the season for us - the World Club Championship was an overwhelming influence on the year."

"But hindsight is one thing, because no-one could know absolutely beforehand what could happen."

"It was uncharted waters for anyone; no-one knew the effect it would have."

"But in the end I wouldn't have missed it for the world."

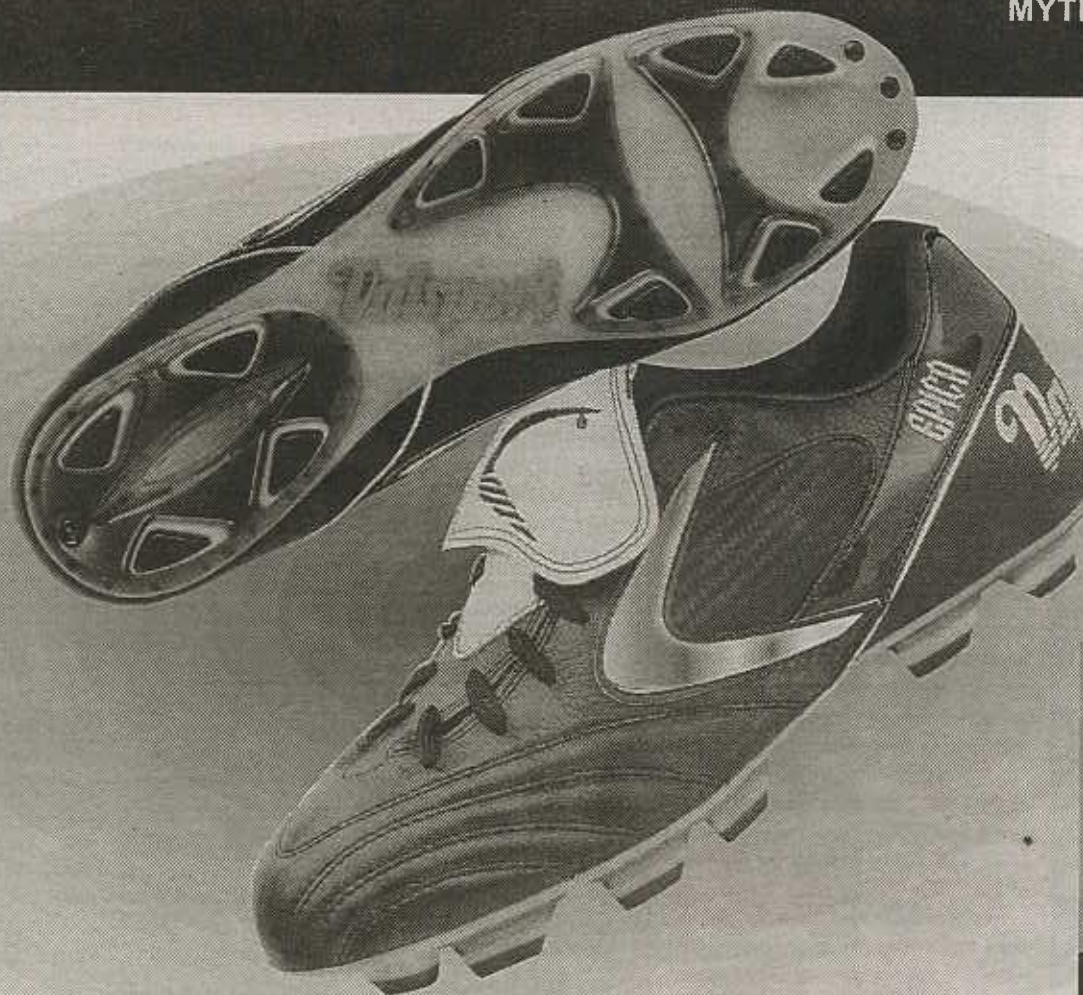
Neither would we, Ange, neither would we.



Valsport

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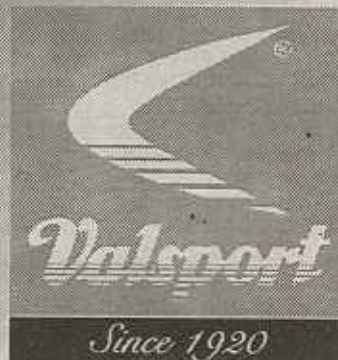
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Matildas coming to town!

Plus world number one and two: USA and China



By Aidan Ormond

Beginning on the last day of this month, the inaugural Pacific Cup will be the last chance for Australia's Matildas to show what they can do before the selectors pick the final squad for Sydney 2000 on June 18. And the tournament itself looms as the biggest women's football tournament of the year outside of the September Olympics.

The Pacific Cup, now a six-nation tournament to be held in Canberra, Sydney and Newcastle (see itinerary) will see the big guns of women's world football, USA and China, battle out the five round tournament together with the improving Matildas, Japan, New Zealand and Canada.

The USA is the Brazil of women's

football, with charismatic stars such as Mia Hamm and Brandi Chastain gaining huge profiles in the USA. Following the Americans' World Cup win last year,



Hamm (below) appeared in TV commercials alongside Michael Jordan, such was her appeal; Chastain adorned the cover of Sports Illustrated.

These players are not only famous, they command huge salaries.

The USA's games, particularly with the Matildas and China, a side keen to emerge from the shadows of being world number two, should attract the largest crowds ever for women's football in Australia.

The Matildas will play the USA in the final round of the tournament at Breakers Stadium on June 11 with the USA and China playing in the first round.

"The individual duels for selections and the quality of the opposition will make this tournament very intense as we lead into the Olympics," said AWSA CEO Warren Fisher.

Continued page seven

Pacific Cup itinerary

ROUND ONE - CANBERRA WEDNESDAY 31 MAY 2000

AIS Athletics Arena
2:00 pm Canada v N Zealand
Bruce Stadium
5:00 pm USA v China

7:30 pm Australia v Japan

ROUND TWO - SYDNEY FRIDAY 2 JUNE 2000

Sydney Football Stadium
3:00 pm Japan v New Zealand
5:30 pm USA v Canada
8:00 pm Australia v China

ROUND THREE - CAMPBELLTOWN. SUNDAY 4 JUNE 2000

Campbelltown Sports Stadium, Sydney
12:00 pm Japan v China
2:30 pm USA v New Zealand
5:00 pm Australia v Canada

ROUND FOUR - NEWCASTLE WEDNESDAY 7 JUNE 2000

Hunter Athletics Centre, Newcastle
3:00 pm Australia v New Zealand

THURSDAY 8 JUNE 2000

Breakers Stadium
3:30 pm China v Canada

6:00 pm USA v Japan

ROUND FIVE - NEWCASTLE SATURDAY 10 JUNE 2000

Hunter Athletics Centre, Newcastle
12:00 pm Canada v Japan
2:30 pm China v New Zealand

SUNDAY 11 JUNE 2000

Breakers Stadium
3:30 pm Australia v USA

Thorpedo sinks then swims at Sorrento

By Brett Klucznik

Perth Glory defender Hamilton Thorp has had a rough month. Two weeks ago he was disciplined and dropped by the NSL side after a public display of insubordination, and last week his drafted State League club Perth S.C. informed him that his services were not required.

Thorp (right) then transferred to Sorrento and made his debut against E.C.U. Joondalup.

There was finally some joy in Thorp's otherwise bleak month, playing the match up-front he scored his side's second goal as they marched to a 4-1 victory.

Sorrento have over the years produced a number of quality players including Socceroo Shaun Murphy, Jamie Hamwell (Perth Glory), Richard Watson (Canberra Cosmos), and Tony Carbone (former Young Socceroo).

And coach Gerry Christie is determined to produce more stars of tomorrow, "that's the policy of the club this year.

"Since Glory came along there hasn't been the importance of winning the League, I think it's more important that we bring good quality young players through," he said.



The club seems to be achieving their aim, evidenced by two players - David Tarka (AIS.) and Robbie Gaspar (Sydney Olympic) - moving onto greener pastures in recent times.

"Both of them are outstanding players," said Christie.

"I'm quite sad to lose them, but it's great for the club. And if we lose another two this year we'll be quite happy."

Meanwhile with Bayswater City's season getting off in what can only be described as terrible style, veteran Allan Pottier has resigned from his role as first team coach. Jimmy Pearson is his replacement.

Former Glory keeper Tommy Maras is now helping out in the coaching department.

Since leaving Perth Glory at the conclusion of the 1997/98 season, Maras has been playing in the W.A. State League with Perth S.C.

But this season he's stepped back from playing to assist Graham Normanton with the coaching duties.

"It's a different role at the club, before I was just playing and now I'm playing and coaching, it's sitting back a little bit and helping these younger players coming through," he said.

FIFA instructor helping in WA

By Brett Klucznik

FIFA coaching instructor Jack Gallagher is in Perth at the moment helping out at the Perth Soccer Academy which is run by friend Rick Slade.

A recreational program established in January of this year, the academy differs from other facilities in Perth in that it is not an elite coaching program, rather it is open to all children who would like to play the game.

Interviewed by Paul Tombides on Channel 31 recently, Gallagher was first asked about Australia's recent progress on the world stage.

"I think that the development of Australian soccer in the last 10-15 years is incredible and everybody in the world is aware of the quality of youth soccer here.

"Everybody was very disappointed that you didn't get into the last World Cup finals, it was real tragic because everybody feels that Oceania is done down in terms of representation.

"My own feeling is that every confederation should have the right to one or two automatic entries into the finals stage of the World Cup."

And should the Socceroos make the make the next World Cup finals?

"I think there would be a tremendous explosion of enthusiasm that you need badly because soccer competes here against the footy, against cricket, against so many sports and I think it needs to sell itself to a wider public.

"Specifically, you need to develop programs to get large numbers of children playing soccer at a recreational level just for the enjoyment of it so you will get a large base from which future stars will emerge.

"I have a feeling that you're really starting to see children identifying with the stars at Perth Glory as their role models, and of course the Australian players in Europe.

"And I think that once those role models exist, that are Australian role models as opposed to Spanish or German or English or Italian, then that will be a big factor in the way that Australian soccer

shoots forward."

One of the keys to young Australian players making the grade overseas is the quality of experience they gain here and Gallagher believes this needs to be zeroed in on.

While he acknowledges that you can't stop the flow of talent overseas, Gallagher offers some solutions.

"That happens in my country Northern Ireland ... many really talented 17-year-olds shift across to England and into big club - you can help foster it."

Gallagher suggests that we stage regular underage tournaments in Australia to benefit our youngsters, and hold training camps overseas for identified players for extended periods to help prepare them for life in Europe.

While talking about the game in Western Australia specifically, some of what Gallagher had to say can easily be translated to the national level.

"People talk about the isolation of Western Australia, and I think you need to stop seeing that as a problem and start perceiving it as a possibility to want to get a Western Australian football federation that's almost like an independent nation.

"Have everybody affiliated to it - your competition programs, your youth development programs, your coach development programs and have your national youth tournaments - under-14s, under-16s, under-18s - like we do in Northern Ireland very successfully.

"And bring in teams from all over Asia and eventually all over the world ... start looking at the ways you could entice opposition to come here, nations like Malaysia or Indonesia.

"I've coached in these places and they'd be very happy to come here, they would love, like I do, the climate here and the cleanliness and the opportunity to be involved in a high level tournament.

"So there's so many ideas you could pursue where the isolation is negated, but you've got to be serious about it."

Continued from page six

"For the fans to see the far and away best two sides in the world - USA and China - with the added spice of seeing the Matildas and how far we are closing the gap on these two teams ... it just doesn't get better than this," he added.

And off the field it's just getting better for 'Matildas' the brand name. In a first for an Australian soccer team, they have been chosen to endorse an overseas product. Their Japanese TV commercial for toothpaste aired last week on free-to-air and cable TV.

Insiders say the commercial - shot on a deserted beach in WA - is very clever and opens the team up to more commercial possibilities in the future following the global success of their calendar.

Plus teenage Matilda Alicia Ferguson was recently featured in Who Weekly's world's most beautiful people colour special.

"We must be doing well if certain sections of the Melbourne media want to criticize us," said Fisher.



While the Matildas are playing in the Pacific Cup the next generation of Aussie female stars will be competing in the Adidas Cup in the USA.

The Australian U/17 team - coached by Jane Oakley and Wendy Carter - will assemble at the AIS in Canberra for a three-day camp commencing May 24, before travelling to Houston, Texas for the tournament scheduled for May 30 to 4 June.

Standout selections include impressive South Australians Stacey Stocco and Julie Dolan Medal winner Ann Marie Vozzo (pictured).

Coach Carter said it was a squad with creativity, flair, speed and confidence on the ball.

Other nations competing in the Adidas Cup are USA, China, Germany and two US select sides. The Australian squad is: Simone Borucinski, Kathryn Collins, Hayley Crawford, Belinda Gawlik, Kate Gill, Lana Harch, Jordie Hinks, Justine King, Selin Kuraialy, Justine McLaughlin, Jessica Mitchell, Amber Neilson, Bronwyn Nutley, Karla Reuter, Lorissa Stevens, Stacey Stocco, Ann Marie Vozzo.

Kupresak tips Adelaide City to win Grand Final

By Aidan Ormond

Amid all the hype surrounding this year's enticing NSL finals series it's easy to forget those not involved, particularly when one such player's team finished dead last.

Sydney United's Velimir Kupresak only ever wanted one thing: to win a grand final with his beloved Sydney United, a club he has stood loyally with over 11 fluctuating years at Edensor Park.

Last season was to be it, or so he thought. The exciting David Mitchell-coached side defied all predictions by making the grand final. Sadly, and like the 1997 finale against Brisbane Strikers, the home side, spurred on by a large gallery, overcame a side in red shirts many said would have been worthy winners.

You can talk about two-legged finals, but at the end of the day that's how it's played here in the Lucky Country.

Kupresak's dream once again left him in a cold sweat.

There was talk then that the big defender may quit but he stayed on. In a side lacking experience he stood out in the campaign just finished. If he did not sustain an injury United may have even finished a little higher this season?

Approaching his 37th birthday the popular 'Vela' is not looking at making any quick decisions: a three-month holiday back in Croatia and his family are the only things currently on his agenda.

"It's very hard question," he said in

his broken English. "When I come back I make decision. My family wants me to retire though!"

On top of his footy commitments, Kupresak runs his own painting and decorating business simply called 'Vela's Painting'. Together with his playing and training schedule, it has not been easy on anyone in the Kupresak household.

"We don't see him that often," said Adriana Kupresak, the United defender's daughter.

Asked if she would like to see him more often she replied with a chuckle, "yes and no, it depends on what mood he's in! But yes, Mum wanted him to quit a long time ago."

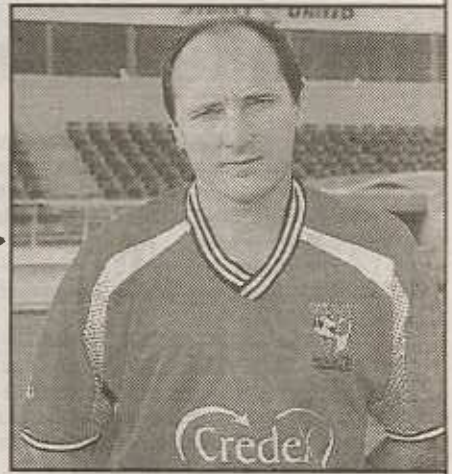
Kupresak is in a delicate position. If when he returns he decides not to play it will be tacit agreement that United is not good enough to win the Grand Final.

"I want something to win, so when the side finishes last it's very hard. I've played for 11 years and never win anything. Always you must believe you can win."

"To win the Grand Final is my dream but we need new players for next year."

"You are right, it's going to be difficult for me to make a decision when I return," he added.

When asked about coaching Kupresak demurred, saying his good friendship with current coach Ivan Petkovic meant that he would rather not talk about such speculation, having said



that he would rather coach the young players at the club.

Kupresak is also ideally placed to comment on Power's disappointing season, given he played with almost their entire squad last year.

"Money," he said adamantly. "At Sydney United players make maybe 10-20,000 per year, but at Power they were earning up to \$100,000 and this puts pressure on those players."

United's 1-0 home win over Power was one of the sweetest victories for Kupresak, even though he was not keen to discuss the bonus his team was on.

"Do you believe me when I say Adelaide City will win the Grand Final?" he asked.

Given the Zebs had not qualified for the finals at the time of this interview Zoran Matic can only hope Kupresak has not put the mockers on his campaign!

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AUSSIES on the world stage

A round-up of how our Aussies players fared abroad this last week ...

Viduka claims Player of the Year and heads south?

Mark Viduka put a disappointing Celtic season behind him when he was named the Scottish Professional Footballers Association's player of the year.

The striker has been a major hit at Parkhead this season, leading the goalscoring charts with 27.

Viduka (right), who has previously won Australia's Most Valuable Player twice, as well as best Foreigner in the Croatian League during his time with Croatia Zagreb, is particularly pleased with the recognition afforded him by his peers for his season with Celtic.

Speaking with the London Times he said he was very proud: "Personally, this Award gives me a lot of pride and satisfaction, because it's been given to me from my fellow professionals, who are the best judges of footballers."

"It's their life, they live it and breathe it every day and they know what goes into being a good player."

"The award also gives me a lot of satisfaction because I feel it silences a lot of the critics, who had written me off as soon as I came to Celtic, and even before I came to Scotland, so yes, it feels great."

The former Melbourne Knights striker knows first hand the long and sometimes difficult road that many Australians, and in fact Australian soccer has faced for recognition on the European scene, and therefore sees an added significance in this achievement.

"Coming from Australia, we haven't been looked upon as a huge soccer nation, but we're slowly bringing the reputation up to where it should be."

"All of us, look at Harry Kewell winning the English Premier League's Young Player of the Year Award, and in my view, he should have also won the Player of the Year instead of coming third, look at Mark Bosnich's achievements with Manchester United, then there's Craig Moore having a big impact and coming third in this Award."

"It's good for us, it's good for Australian football and its reputation, and it's great to see that we're doing so well overseas, not just competing in the Leagues, but standing up and being counted."

Viduka is the first to acknowledge that so far it hasn't been all smooth sailing, but despite being a constant figure under the media spotlight, he has been able to enjoy most aspects of

the Scottish game.

"I think we all know that since I've been in Scotland, it's been a bit of a turbulent time, but really, once I started playing football and concentrating on playing football, it's been great here."

"I really enjoy playing with Celtic, and I think that's reflected on the park where you have the chance to play in front of crowds of 60 000 every week, so in a nutshell, it's been a really good season for me."

"So far, I would have to say that my most memorable moment was winning the League Cup with Celtic, it was really a big buzz lifting the trophy for myself, for the team, for the fans."

"And while I've scored a lot of goals this season, the one that stands out the most in my mind has to be the one I scored against Rangers, it was great to net one in the Old Firm derby."

"I'm looking forward to a big holiday and then we'll see - I don't see that far into the future," he concludes.

This season has been a major disappointment for the Parkhead side with Rangers waltzing away with the Premier League.

But Viduka captured his first trophy with Celtic when he collected a CIS League Cup winners' medal in March.

Speculation currently surrounds the immediate future of Viduka, with one bookmaker quoting odds on him becoming the highest scorer in the English Premiership next season.

One report indicates that Viduka is set to move to Tottenham Hotspur in a 8.5 million (\$A22.82 million) deal. Viduka, who was crowned earlier this week the Scottish player of the year after scoring 27 goals for Glasgow Celtic, is expected to sign a four-year deal worth 25,000 (\$A67,110) a week to move to the London club.

The Daily Express newspaper reported that Tottenham had tried to keep the Viduka move quiet but the deal was said to be "all but done" for the 24-year-old striker.

But Viduka's agent has poured cold water on the claim. Viduka's agent Bernie Mandic is adamant that there has been no contact between the north London club, Celtic and the player.

"I will say categorically that there has been no contact between Spurs and Mark Viduka," said Mandic.



"Tottenham have not approached me. People keep making assumptions that Mark will be playing here, there and everywhere but until Celtic give the go-ahead for something like that to happen, it is not going to happen."

"Some people are trying to flog Mark to clubs all over the place but I challenge them to find one single club I have contacted about Mark Viduka."

"It has not happened and unless Tottenham go directly to Celtic, we certainly aren't doing anything."

In English Premier League games the places for Champions League behind champions Manchester United are up for grabs with Arsenal, Leeds and Liverpool vying for the two spots.

Leeds jumped over the top of Liverpool when they beat Watford 3-1 with Young Player of the Year Harry Kewell playing a full game. Leeds had the opportunity to consolidate their spot when they played last night (after Inside Soccer went to press).

In other Premier League games Mark Schwarzer played two full matches, as Middlesbrough drew 2-2 at home to Newcastle midweek and 1-1 at home to Watford. Watford's Aussie, Richard Johnson, missed the game after rupturing cruciate ligaments in his previous game and looks destined to spend a considerable time on the sidelines.

In the Nationwide Division One Wolverhampton Wanderers blew their chance of moving into a play-off spot when they were beaten 3-1 away to Bolton in a midweek game. Kevin Muscat played the full ninety minutes as he did in the weekend game away to Port Vale. The Wolves were still in contention for a play-off spot but were relying on other results going their way. They did their part by beating the Vale by 0-1 but finished in seventh spot two points behind the sixth placed Bolton Wanderers for whom Aussie Con Boutsianis is yet to make his debut.

There was better news for other Aussies in the First Division at the top of the table and the bottom. The happiest Aussie in England (beside Mark Bosnich's triumph in the Premier League) is little Danny Tiatto whose Manchester City side clinched promotion to the Premier League when they beat Blackburn 1-4 to secure their hold onto second spot behind Charlton.

Tiatto played the full game having become an important cog in the City machine for the second half of the season while John Filan was again on the bench after his return from injury.

Stan Lazaridis is hoping to join his fellow

Aussie via the play-offs with his Birmingham team finishing in fifth spot after a 0-0 home draw with Grimsby. Lazaridis was replaced in the 76th minute.

At the bottom end of the table the Aussies in danger of relegation all survived with the exception of Frank Talia's Swindon side that was bound for the Second Division quite a few weeks ago.

Talia did not play in Swindon's last game, a 2-2 away draw with Sheffield United, due to injury but Shaun Murphy returned from suspension for United and played a full game.

Jason Kearton's Crewe Alexandra needed to win to ensure they stay up and they did just that with a 0-2 away win at fourth placed Bamsley. Kearton played the full game in the win which saw his team end up sixth from bottom.

Jason Van Blerk also played a full game for West Brom Albion who also needed to win to secure the tenancy and they also did themselves proud with a remarkable 2-0 home win over runaway champions Charlton. The win put them just above the relegation zone in fourth last spot three points above Walsall.

Other Aussies featured in the last week of the First Division were George Kulscar, who came on the 84th minute in QPR's 1-3 win over Portsmouth, and Craig Foster, who was replaced in the 60th minute of Crystal Palace's 1-2 away win over Tranmere.

Young Aussie Gareth Edds also played a full game for Nottingham Forest in their 2-3 away win over Stockport. Edds made his full debut in Forest's previous game.

Millwall clinched a play-off spot in the Nationwide Second Division when they had a 1-0 home win over Oxford in the last game of the season. They finished in fifth spot after Bristol Rovers were beaten in their last game and now play fourth placed Wigan with the winner to meet the winner of Stoke against Gillingham to decide the third promoted team.

Both Aussies, Lucas Neill and Tim Cahill, played full games with Cahill receiving a booking.

Steve Mautone's Gillingham missed out on the automatic second spot position when they were beaten 1-0 in the last game after a 4-1 win midweek. Mautone was on the bench for both games.

In Holland Zeljko Kalac was in goals for Roda JC in their 1-2 win over Fortuna Sittard but received a yellow card in the 46th minute.

In Croatia, Ante Milicic played a full game as Rijeka were beaten 2-0 by Dinamo who clinched the championship with Rijeka in fifth spot, still in contention for the Europe bound fourth spot.

Garcia returns to Olyroo squad

By Scott O'Donnell

Round Nine of the S-League saw a mixed bag of results for the Aussies.

Marine Castle bounced back from two heavy losses to beat Tampines Rovers 1 - 0 at home. Michael Garcia and Anthony Carbone both had strong games for Marine Castle with Carbone unlucky not to get his name on the scoresheet.

This win could be one of the last games that Garcia plays in Singapore. It has been reported here that he will be returning home as he has been recalled to the Olyroo squad. He has been good value for Marine Castle and will not be easily replaced.

SAFFC remain on top of the table with an uninspiring 2 - 0 win over Mirko Jurilj's Sembawang Rangers, in what was a poor advertisement for the S-League. Both teams looked lethargic and found it hard to control the ball on a pitch that was wet in places and rock hard elsewhere.

Alan Vest's Geylang United suffered their third loss of the season going down 3 - 1 to the only undefeated team in the league, Tanjong Pagar. Geylang had no answer to the twin tower strike force of Tanjong Pagar's Nicodome Boucher and Boubacher Seck. The loss means Geylang, who were one of the favourites to win this year's title, will have to become more consistent in the second round if they are to stay in touch with the leaders.

Defending Champions Home United finally hit form with a resounding 4 - 0 win over Jurong.

Home's Brazilian striker, Egmar Concealves scored all of his team's goals in a completely dominating display. Aussie, Ernie Tapal had a great game setting up two of Egmar's goals.

In the other games Clementi Khalsa defeated Gombak 3-2, while Woodlands had a 2 - 0 win over bottom side Balestier Central.

Card Update

PLAYERS:	Y	R	Tot
Che Bunce	9	2	11
Jacob Burns	9	1	10
Harry James	9	1	10
Jamie Hamwell	10	0	10
Danny Burt	10	0	10
Stuart McLaren	10	0	10
Manny Gotis	8	1	9
Lee Jones	8	1	9
Vince Savoca	8	1	9
Gabriel Mendez	9	0	9
Andy Vargas	9	0	9
Walter Ardene	6	2	8
Troy Halpin	6	2	8
Christian Care	7	1	8
Aytek Genc	7	1	8
Lubomir Lapsansky	7	1	8
Robert Liparoti	7	1	8
Goran Lozanovski	7	1	8
Dino Mennillo	7	1	8
Nick Meredith	7	1	8
Aurelio Vidmar	7	1	8
Jason Vukadin	7	1	8
Dean Fak	8	0	8
Chris Jackson	8	0	8

CLUBS:			
Parramatta Power	71	9	80
South Melbourne	72	7	79
Canberra	70	7	77
Sydney Olympic	71	5	76
Football Kingz	67	7	74
Marconi	68	6	74
Sydney United	65	5	70
Melbourne Knights	59	7	66
Wollongong	62	4	66
Gippsland Falcons	59	4	63
Perth Glory	55	6	61
Adelaide City Force	57	3	60
Brisbane Strikers	58	2	60
Northern Spirit	49	4	53
Carlton	42	4	46
Newcastle	43	3	46
TOTAL	970	82	1052

	Home	Away	Total
Yellows	433	537	970
Reds	32	50	82
Total	465	587	1052

REFEREES:	G	Y	R	Aver
Mathew Breeze	32	119	14	4.2
Simon Micallef	31	106	6	3.6
Brett Hugo	27	112	10	4.2
Gerry Connolly	29	66	7	2.5
Con Diomis	27	124	8	4.9
Eddie Lennie	27	125	7	4.9
Mark Shield	26	106	9	4.4
Jeremy Blaney	21	52	4	2.7
Perry Mur	14	18	1	1.4
David Dwight	12	43	3	3.8
Derek Rugg	7	23	6	4.1
Brian Precious	6	29	3	5.3
Wayne Dade	6	33	2	5.8
Craig Zetter	5	14	2	3.2

The next Harry Kewell?

The New South Wales Soccer Federation congratulates our most famous graduate, Harry Kewell, who was named the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) Young Player of the Year in a glittering award ceremony at London's Grosvenor House Hotel.

Harry was also named in the English Premiership's Team of the Season and finished third in both the PFA Player of the Year and Football Writers' Player of the Year.



The New South Wales Soccer Federation, in conjunction with the New South Wales Institute of Sport, runs the Intensive Training Centre (ITC) at Valentine Sports Park, at the Federation's headquarters.

"I'm sure I speak for everyone involved with soccer in New South Wales when I say congratulations to Harry," said NSW Federation President, Mr Peter Gray.

"He is a highly gifted player, and New South Wales is pleased to have been a part of his development at a significant time in his playing career. Along with all Australian soccer fans, we look forward to him spearheading our attack (along with Mark Viduka) for Australia's World Cup qualifiers next year," Mr Gray said.

The best young talent in NSW is earmarked early through Zone Camps and players who are identified as having special talent are inducted into the ITC high performance program.

"Harry was in the inaugural ITC squad along with current Olyroo (Australian National Under-23 Team) captain, Brett Emerton," said Mr Gray.

The fertile grounds of Valentine Sports Park still produce quality players.

For example, teenage defender Gareth Edds made his first-team debut for Nottingham Forest on the weekend and ex-Joeys (Australian National Under-17 Team) skipper, Mark Byrnes, is being courted by one of the world's most powerful clubs, Germany's Bayern Munich.

The tradition continues in the National Talent Identification Championships to be held at Valentine Sports Park in July, when the New South Wales Under-16 and Under-15 State teams, largely powered by ITC players, tackle the rest of Australia.

Just how many more Harrys are out there?

NSL TOP SCORERS

DAMIAN MORI	22
(Adelaide City Force)	
PABLO CARDOZO	19
(Sydney Olympic)	
MICHAEL CURCIJA	19
(South Melbourne)	
STUART YOUNG (WW)	17
JOHN BUONAVOGLIA(NB)	16
ALEX MOREIRA (C)	15
SASO PETROVSKI(WW)	14
ZELJKO BABIC(MS)	13
CON BOUTSIANIS (PG)	13
ALISTAIR EDWARDS(PG)	13

CROWD COMPARISON:
Cumulative to Round 29
99/00: 1,373,273
98/99: 1,180,745



	(OVERALL)								(HOME)								(AWAY)							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A						
PERTH GLORY	34	19	7	8	60	42	64	18	12	3	2	36	18	7	4	6	24	24						
Wollongong Wolves	34	17	9	8	72	44	60	28	10	2	5	33	22	7	7	3	39	22						
Carlton	34	17	7	10	55	39	58	16	9	4	4	29	19	8	3	6	26	20						
Adelaide Force	34	16	8	10	57	37	56	20	11	3	3	38	18	5	5	7	19	19						
Sydney Olympic	34	16	7	11	56	40	55	16	9	5	3	36	18	7	2	8	20	22						
Marconi Stallions	34	16	7	11	53	49	55	4	10	2	5	30	24	6	5	6	23	25						
Newcastle Breakers	34	14	9	11	44	44	51	0	8	5	4	28	21	6	4	7	16	23						
Football Kingz	34	15	5	14	57	59	50	-2	9	3	5	32	25	6	2	9	25	34						
Brisbane Strikers	34	13	10	11	46	40	49	6	8	6	3	31	18	5	4	8	15	22						
South Melbourne	34	14	7	13	55	51	49	4	9	4	4	31	16	5	3	9	24	35						
Parramatta Power	34	14	5	15	52	47	47	5	8	4	5	30	19	6	1	10	22	28						
Melbourne Knights	34	13	6	15	44	57	45	-13	9	2	6	25	19	4	4	9	19	38						
Northern Spirit	34	11	3	20	41	58	36	-17	8	2	7	22	22	3	1	13	19	36						
Canberra Cosmos	34	9	9	16	44	64	36	-20	5	4	8	20	27	4	5	8	24	37						
Gippsland Falcons	34	7	8	19	23	49	29	-26	4	4	9	13	21	3	4	10	10	28						
Sydney United	34	5	5	24	19	58	20	-39	5	3	9	15	22	0	2	15	4	36						

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Four years in and Glory are minor premiers

PERTH GLORY 1

Harnwell 38.

NORTHERN SPIRIT 0

Sunday afternoon at Perth Oval, Perth. Crowd: 13,554.



MATCH STATS:



PERTH
Petkovic, Trajkovski
(Afkos 89), Harnwell,
Milioevic, Valle, Miller,
Wehrman, Naven,
Edgar, Aurelio,
Despotovski (Buljan 70).



NORTHERN SPIRIT:
Henderson, Crook,
Bilokapic, Rudan,
Langdon, Cranney,
Enes, Slater, Cunico
(Snyder 80), Bingley,
Griffiths (Catanzaro 70).

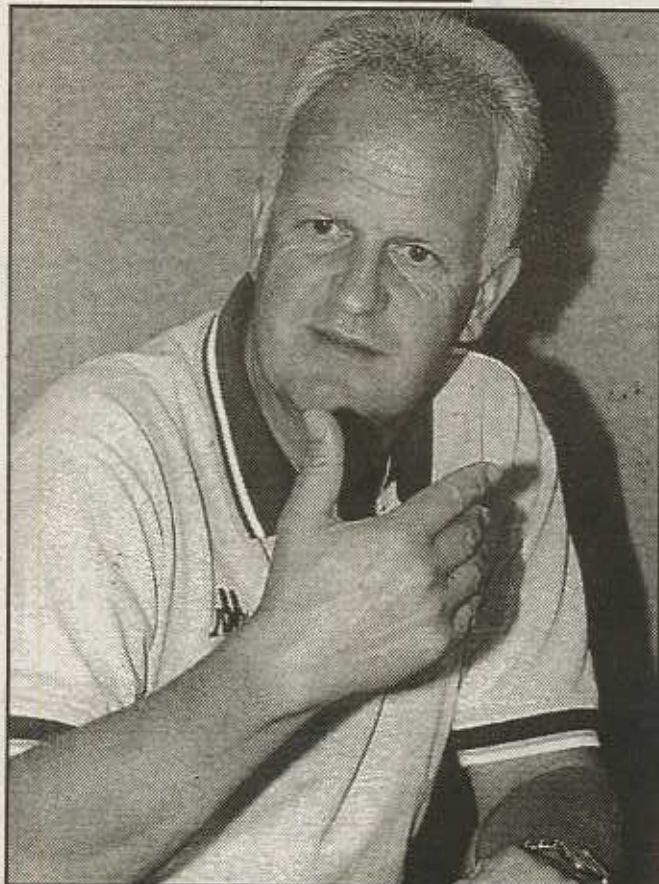
Yellows:

Spirit: Catanzaro 81.

Best Players:

3. Matthew Langdon (Northern Spirit)
2. Jamie Harnwell (Perth Glory)
1. Robbie Slater (Northern Spirit)

Referee: Matthew Breeze



Bernd Stange: "We owe it to them (the fans) now to finish this." Pic by Stephen Webb

By Dennis Gedling

Perth Glory stumbled to a 1-0 win over a resilient Northern Spirit at Perth Oval to seal their inaugural minor premiership. A goal from Jamie Harnwell - his second goal in as many weeks - was the difference between a cautious home side that played safe and a team from Sydney which had nothing to lose.

The scenes after the final whistle were something that hasn't been seen at Perth Oval or indeed at many NSL grounds. The celebra-

tions of the fans, the fireworks and the laps of honour a prelude to what may be a golden finish to a troubled season for the Perth side.

Glory went into this game without Alistair Edwards and Ivan Ergic, both players fit enough to play but rested for the looming finals against the Wollongong Wolves.

Bobby Despotovski was welcomed back into the side to play along side Aurelio with the other fit Glory striker Peter Buljan on the bench.

Spirit was only missing David Seal with suspension, one of the few times this season Spirit has fielded a full strength team.

It was end to end action in the early part of the game and seven minutes into the match Spirit had three in the box as a dangerous cross came in but desperate defending by the home side made sure the ball was cleared.

A majority of the half was spent by Glory doing their usual ploy of holding on to the ball and looking for the break, a kind of sucker punch used to good effect against the Wolves.

The Spirit's pace was a worry for the Glory but Kasey Wehrman almost scored an amazing 30 metre goal when he noticed that the Spirit keeper had come off his line - his pot shot flew over the bar by centimeters.

Wehrman had another chance on goal after half an hour with a poor finish but the visitors from the Sydney's North Shore weren't without their chances, a free kick taken by Ian Crook shot past the keeper just inches wide of the goal, the velocity of the shot would put the likes of David Beckham and Ian Harte to shame.

Glory broke the deadlock in the 38th minute when a hopeful cross by Trajkovski, just trying to keep the ball from going out for a goal kick, shot across the area to find Harnwell on the far post where he powered a header past the Spirit 'keeper.

The cross by the Glory wingback was inch perfect for the big defender who did well to place himself in such an attacking position.

In the second half Spirit turned the game around with Robbie Slater switching from a forward to right-sided midfielder - the role he was famous for overseas.

Matthew Langdon was having a field day on the left side, finding space

in the hole left when Trajkovski made his runs forward.

Spirit had all the answers in the second half but just couldn't find the back of the net. The game was end to end but no chances could be created by the pairing of Despotovski and Aurelio, both players lacking the final touch to set up the other for a chance on goal.

Wehrman stepped up a gear in the second half for Perth and made a daring run through the middle and had a ping on goal but his shot once again went over the crossbar.

The tiring Despotovski (chasing every

single ball does that to you) was subbed for Buljan after 65 minutes and Ryan Griffiths made way for the dangerous Simon Catanzaro for the visitors. As well as subbing Griffiths, Graham Arnold switched Slater with Langdon which brought more pressure on the Glory, the two wingers dominating and creating many chances for Spirit.

Spirit's attacking runs had the Glory under all kinds of pressure. Trajkovski would continually run forward to help out Buljan and Aurelio leaving Slater with acres of space when possession was lost; Langdon on the right constantly getting past a fading Scott Miller to set up numerous chances but the Glory defence held firm.

The last real chance of the match came when Buljan set off on a break Aurelio was in acres of space and waiting for the pass but Buljan decided to go himself and was stripped of the ball. It didn't matter though as the whistle was blown and the Glory fans and players went into raptures.

The embracing and broad grins worn by the home side was an indicator of the relief after a tough home and away season of 34 matches. Each player was cheered as they were called up onto the presentation stand but the biggest cheer was for coach Bernd Stange, the last man to be called up after the players.

The lap of honour - taken at a snail's pace - was so the Glory crew made sure they applauded each and every small section of the crowd.

Special mention to the Spirit team who also stayed out and applauded Glory and their fans and most importantly the Spirit fans that had made the trip over to see their team play despite the fact they were no chance to make the six.

After the match Stange said: "This was such a moment, the biggest moment in the short history of our club, we are getting more and more towards professional status and the team work was of the highest order."

He then went on to say: "Everyone here today will have a ticket for the home finals, we owe it to them now to finish this, we have had a lot of problems on and off the pitch but we can go on with it".

Spirit coach Graham Arnold commented: "We didn't make it easy for them, we try to follow them on and off the pitch, we have had out problems too but hopefully we can re build for next season."

Arnold also made the point that "I made my players stay out on the pitch and watch Glory celebrate the minor crown to make them



Jamie Harnwell: the former Uniroy is turning into one of the league's best defenders.

see what it is like to even get that small success."

Both coaches agreed that the season is top long and really perhaps the minor premiers should be capped champions overall without the finals.

Arnold said that his side out there on Perth Oval was the first time he had been injury free and the fact he had teenagers filling most the key roles this season.

Spirit were the better side on the day but it was the crowd and the desire to finish top that drove the Glory onto the win and those crucial three points.

The scenes in the in the members' area after the game were unbelievable, seeing the fans lift Stange over above them and carrying him across the room was quite humorous.

Slater and Langdon were outstanding for the visitors, dominating their respective wings with pace and poise.

Dion Valle and Harnwell were once again hard to breakdown at the back for the home side.

A poor game but the right result for the team that had something to play for.

It's hard to imagine the scenes if Glory actually win the championship going on the celebrations of this match.

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Dignified end for Posti while Sterrey left to rue his side's naivete

SOUTH MELBOURNE 4

Anastasiadis 5, Trimboli 42, Magnacca 81, Curcija 88.

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 0

Sunday afternoon at Bob Jane Stadium, Melbourne. Crowd 5,011



MATCH STATS



SOUTH MELBOURNE:

Jones, De Amicis, Iosifidis, Culibrk, Lozanovski, Clarkson (Tsekinis 65), Coveny, Trimboli(c 81), Curcija, Anastasiadis (Magnacca 65).



NEWCASTLE BREAKERS:

Catlin, McManus, Smith (Trpceviski 59), Moore, Sprod (c),

Dodd, Owens (Tancheski, 46), Wilson, Roberts, Harper (Juchniewicz 78), Buonavoglia.

Yellows: Nil

BEST PLAYER:

3. PANOPOULOS (SMELB)

2. Trimboli (SMelb)

1. De Amicis (SMelb).

Referee: Perry Mur

Postecoglou, who was leaving to take up his new appointment as National Youth coach.

Newcastle's task for this game was clear, if difficult. Not only did they need to win at the home of the reigning Champions on a day when South Melbourne was likely to work hard for their outgoing coach, but they also needed results elsewhere to form a particular pattern.

As it happened, nothing went Breakers' way on the night.

In fact, the misfortune began early. The enormity of the task had been increased in the fifth minute when South Melbourne swept into the lead.

John Anastasiadis converted unchallenged from a close-in header following a Goran Lozanovski corner from the right which was nodded on by Vaughan Coveny after just five minutes. Anastasiadis had earned the corner himself when he forced Breakers' keeper Bob Catlin to save after Lozanovski sent him free.

The shell-shocked Breakers almost found themselves two behind within two minutes. Lozanovski - this time popping up on the left wing, crossed to where Anastasiadis had found space at the far post, but his header across goal was deflected wide.

Three minutes before the break, 350-game Paul Trimboli stretched the lead, cleverly striking the ball wide past Catlin from just outside the six-yard box. Coveny had crossed to the near post where Lozanovski met it with his back to goal. After assessing that a turn and a shot of his own was not on, he passed the ball to Trimboli whose placed shot hit the inside of Catlin's left post, breaking Breakers' hearts.

Breakers' coach Lee Sterrey was fuming at these defensive lapses, and his side's missed opportunities at the other end. "We got punished for naivete. The first goal came from nothing - a bloke gets a free header at the edge of the box. The second goal scored right on half-time probably broke our back. Both first-half goals were soft."

For the last few weeks Coveny had been playing wide out on the left, rather than in his usual striker position. Postecoglou said that this change was as a result of running out of defenders and the need to play Fausto De Amicis at the back, but the change has brought another option to South's play. On many occasions, Coveny was able to use his speed to good effect wide, leaving space for the strikers in the middle.

In between these two South first-half goals, South had the better of the chances. Michael Curcija had two good opportunities, the better of which was the outcome of some excellent close-control from Trimboli. Trimboli had in a single movement controlled the ball and spun past his marker some 35 metres out, then fed Curcija with a perfectly-weighted through-ball to which Curcija got a sliding touch, only to send it narrowly wide.

But Newcastle had gradually fought their way back into the contest, and for a period from mid-way through the half had grafted a few chances of their own.

The front pairing of veteran striker Andy Harper, and diminutive speedster John Buonavoglia began to settle and started to pose the South defence some tricky problems. Buonavoglia brought out the best in South

keeper Chris Jones who saved low after Greg Owens' good work sent him free.

"In front of goal (we) were just not deadly," said Sterrey. "That's the difference between an experienced side and an inexperienced side."

The game's destiny was confirmed with ten minutes remaining when Anthony Magnacca - brought on in a double change with Jim Tsekinis for Anastasiadis and David Clarkson - ran with the ball from the half-way line to score in a quick South break from defence as Newcastle pressed for the goal that would at least establish some hope.

Magnacca was clearly enjoying his game, as from the early moments of his introduction, he sought the ball, and brought it forwards and through tangles of Breakers' defenders at the slightest opportunity, and making several good chances for himself as a consequence.

By this stage in the game, there was no point in Newcastle doing anything other than press ahead, committing resources to attack, and leaving the barest of defences to cope with South's counter-attacks.

Not surprisingly, there was a fourth South goal. The coup-de-grace was administered by Curcija two minutes from the end after a sweeping move involving Tsekinis, Coveny, and Elias Demoutzidis, making his debut as a late substitute for Trimboli.

Postecoglou was chaired from the field by his players after completing some post-match television obligations, the disappointed Breakers' players having left the arena, ruing a season that had evaporated in the last few games.

"We played out best over the last six or seven games of the season," said Postecoglou.



National Youth Coach Ange Postecoglou: "It was a great way to finish a disappointing year."

"I felt for Newcastle today. We were sharp today, and took a couple of chances - they missed a couple, and with the emotion of the day, it was a great way to finish a disappointing year."

"As a coach, that's the way you want to go out - most of us don't get that opportunity."



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Lee Sterrey: "Both first half goals were soft."

By Alan Clark

It was a double farewell at Bob Jane Stadium on Sunday. Breakers' four-nil loss to South Melbourne ended their season when only a few weeks ago it seemed more likely than not that they would feature in their first-ever Finals play-off. For their part, the South faithful said their goodbyes to the club's longest-serving coach, Ange

Meaningless match offers no insight into finals

CARLTON 2

Moreira 17, Marth 55 pen.

WOLLONGONG WOLVES 1

Ceccoli 26.

Sunday afternoon at Olympic Park, Melbourne. Crowd 1,732.



MATCH STATS



CARLTON: Anastasiadis; Anthopoulos, Douglas, Deans, Atkinson, Colosimo, Marth, Terminello, Packer

(Slater 58), Moreira (Vasilevski 75), Markovski (Conroy 58).



WOLLONGONG WOLVES: Pogliacomi; Stanton, Harlock (Blake 46), O'Grady, Ceccoli, Sullivan, Robertson, Huxley (Spencer 78),

Horsley, Masi, Petrovski.

Yellow:

Wolves: Stanton 21, Pogliacomi 54.

Best Players:

3. COLOSIMO (CARL)

2. Huxley (Woll)

1. O'Grady (Woll)

Referee: Simon Micallef.

were without David McPherson and Steve Horvat at the back while Archie Thompson was badly missed up front. But the home side was virtually at full strength compared to the visitors who were without the services of David Cervinski, Scott Chipperfield, Dino Mennillo, Stuart Young and George Souris, while Paul Reid and Noel Spencer started on the bench.

It made for a 'Clayton's' sort of game with neither side particularly energetic in the tackle and referee Simon Micallef felt obliged to reach into his pocket on only the one occasion, but most of the crowd held its breath when he did.

The incident, after just twenty minutes, could have had drastic consequences as Robert Stanton clearly brought down Andrew Packer just over the halfway line as the young Carlton star looked set to break clear for a one-on-one with Wolves' goalkeeper Les Pogliacomi.

Judgements were divided around the ground as to whether the offence was worthy of a red card, and a number of Carlton players were visibly surprised when Stanton was allowed to stay on the pitch.

By that stage the visitors were already a goal down, the result of a class piece of finishing from the Blues' top scorer Alex Moreira. Having been found by a slide-rule pass through the inside right channel from Simon Colosimo, the Brazilian slipped his marker and ran into the box to take possession with time and space up his sleeve. With Pogliacomi badly exposed, Moreira smacked his right foot shot across the 'keeper and into the far corner to give his side tangible reward for their domination of possession.

Had Wollongong been a goal down and a man down with seventy minutes remaining, the match would surely have become a one-sided affair but the Wolves rebounded well and were back on level terms after twenty-six minutes. Alvin Ceccoli found space on the front left corner of the penalty area and latched on to a cross-field ball, taking it down and thumping it past Dean Anastasiadis for a wonderful equaliser.

Carlton had strong claims for a penalty just minutes later, when a goal-bound Markovski header hit the arm of Neil Harlock, but the contact was deemed accidental by Micallef.

Although Carlton were continuing to press forward in numbers, the dearth of clear-cut chances was becoming a concern. Too often the high ball from midfield or the flanks was gathered by Pogliacomi who has blossomed over the past season, whereas the Wolves created some excellent opportunities, usually on the break, with Petrovski and

Masi both going close in the first half.

Carlton's winner came just ten minutes into the second stanza, Andrew Marth converting his fifth penalty of the season after Alex Moreira had run on to a long ball from Mark Atkinson, only to be brought down after rounding the 'keeper.

Neither side showed real urgency during the final half-hour, although the Blues got a scare twelve minutes from time when Wolves debutant Beren Sullivan hit the near post with a vicious in-swinging corner from the left.

Esala Masi was denied by a fine



Alvin Ceccoli: Wolves scorer at Olympic Park.

Anastasiadis save five minutes later, but Carlton hung on to take all three points as the talk started to centre around next week's likely opponents.

Nick Theodorakopoulos was in a relaxed mood after the match despite the loss, conceding the match lacked the edge of other fixtures.

"Obviously we're disappointed for the fans, and I'm sure Stuart shares these sentiments, but what do you do? The double-chance has been achieved and it's just too dangerous to go into two games against Perth missing Cervinski, Chipperfield and Young and Souris and Mennillo. You're better off missing them against Carlton than in a meaningful match."

But Nick T was quick to find a positive, in particular the performances of his younger brigade. "I thought seventeen year-old Beren Sullivan was outstanding and Paul O'Grady was superb in the air."

Stuart Munro was under no illusions as to the nature of the victory, but was obviously pleased to see Carlton in the finals after a year's absence.

"We're just happy to be there. We've had a run of good form recently, losing just two and drawing one of our past eleven games. Obviously tonight's game was neither here nor there but the pleasing thing is that the guys that came in got one under their belts as well which gives the confidence and keeps things going a bit."

Munro confirmed that all the missing players will be available for selection this week and was quietly confident of a good result following the two clashes with Marconi earlier this season.

"We've beaten them in Sydney already this year and we drew the game here which we felt we should have won. But again, finals football is completely different."

Meanwhile Wollongong coach Nick Theodorakopoulos was reluctant to quash all speculation over his coaching future following the completion of the home-and-away season. Although obviously thrilled at taking the Wolves to the brink of the grand final, he has let it be known that his plans to stay at Brandon Park could be altered. Particularly if the right offer came up, and with a number of clubs eagerly pursuing him, the right offer may well be amongst them.

"Chances are I'll be at Wolves next season - we've had some preliminary discussions.

"But it's too early. I don't want to deviate from what has to be achieved in the top six.

"Let's say I did know (if I was leaving), I wouldn't be telling you. We've still got four weeks to go and the Wolves have been extremely good to me."

Theodorakopoulos did confirm however that the decision on whether the World Club Championship will go ahead next year will influence his thinking - should the Wolves win the grand final.

"They'll let us know on June 6 and the chances are there will be. It would influence my decision. That would be something I'd like, yes I would consider it. It would be silly for me not to be exposed in such elements."



Nick Theodorakopoulos: is keen to coach Wolves should they make the World Club Championship. Pic by Stephen Webb

By Kevin Christopher

Carlton achieved their objective on Sunday evening by defeating Wollongong and thus securing third place in the table, but the manner of the victory was far from conclusive and coach Stuart Munro will have plenty of thinking to do before this week's match against Marconi.

To be fair however, nothing about this match was conclusive, with both sides forced to omit key personnel to ensure their availability during the opening phase of the finals. Carlton

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- Our latest Premier League Preview (with BOHUS early season review!)
- And yet another cast list for someone at ASDA
- PLUS: The "A Sporting Season"

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ADELAIDE CITY FORCE 3

Sabljak 77, Kemp 84, Mori 92.

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 1

Nastevski 54.

Sunday afternoon at Hindmarsh Stadium, Adelaide. Crowd: 10,469.

MATCH STATS:



ADELAIDE CITY FORCE: Cagalj, Lagati, Tobin, Mori, Veart, Sabljak, Vidmar, Cartwright (Day 78), Kemp, Hassell, Pelosi.



MELBOURNE KNIGHTS: Acevski, Rajher, Kovacevic, Vukadin, Nastevski, Kelic (Matkovic 73), Urlovic, Zold (Abbas 84), Kiratoglou, Vargas, Pelikan (Magdic 63).

Yellows:

Force: Kemp 44.

Knights: Kelic 29, Kovacevic 84

Best Players:

3. SABLJAK (CITY)

2. Zold (Knights)

1. Tobin (City)

Referee: Brett Hugo

By Margaret Bowden and Donald Campbell

And so the fairy tale continued for Adelaide City Force. In front of a record crowd this season, the Force performed another escape from a one-goal deficit to turn on the real soccer to score three and claim fourth spot, setting up a showdown with Sydney Olympic in their quest to win the championship.

The boys in black and white, discounted earlier in the season as they languished at the bottom of the table, had pulled off the most amazing feat in the history of the National League. In the words of coaching maestro Zoran Matic, this was like 'Escape out of Alcatraz'.

City's first escape in this game came inside a minute when Anthony Pelikan saw Adrian Cagalj well off his line and thumped in a long shot which bounced off the crossbar as Cagalj backpeddled.

The large contingent of Adelaide-based Knights' supporters roared as the City fans bit their nails. But goalscoring sensation Damian Mori had them roaring too as City counter attacked.

Rody Vargas mistimed a clearance 25 metres out and Mori pounced, dodging into the box with only keeper Lupce Acevski to beat. As Acevski came off his line, Mori scuffed his shot wide of the left post.

The Knights were determined to take the three points and threw everything into attack. City looked a bit sus at the back without Costanzo, but as the game went on, Michael Cartwright stamped his authority; Gianluca Lagati got the better of Dragi Nastevski and Zoltan Zold; Bradley Hassell chased back to win possession then dodge around the Knights to send the Force into counter attack; and Alex Tobin played his indomitable, rock solid game.

Hassell fired in cross after cross from the right for Claudio Pelosi and Mori. Nick Sabljak, 88.5 Coast fm Player of the Match, set up Mori and Pelosi for headers with a string of pin-point lobs and crosses, but the City players just couldn't connect.

Hindmarsh came alive twenty minutes in when big Jason Vukadin was lucky not to walk after he floored Lagati with a crude, late tackle. Referee Hugo refused to show a card of any colour, and still kept them in his pocket a few minutes later when Ivan Kelic hacked Lagati down again.

It was obvious the Knights were trying to set Lagati up for retaliation and a send-off, but Lagati was wide awake to the fact and kept his cool, paying back the Knights with some match winning tackles.

The game threatened to get out of hand as Nastevski put a cruncher on danger man Sabljak, then a minute later Kelic shoved Carl Veart square in the back as he sped toward the 18 yard box.

Finally the ref decided it was time to put a stop to the rough stuff and cautioned Nastevski. The free kick almost led to a goal for Adelaide City. It was cleared for a corner which Sabljak sent in low for Pelosi. Pelosi head flicked the ball back to Cartwright running through, but he missed getting a touch by a whisker.

Knights countered and won a corner, Pelikan sending the ball in high. Cagalj palmed it out, but the Knights pounced on it, causing big problems in the City defence. Luckily for the Force, the ball went wide for a goal kick.

Quick as a flash, the ball was down the other end, Sabljak sending in a magic low cross from the left, setting up Pelosi for a diving header from 8 metres. The ball looked in, but Acevski pulled off a miraculous reflex save.

Veart and Mori then combined with a slick series of passes before Mori tapped the ball back for Veart to blast at goal from 20 metres - wide of the left hand post!

Half a minute later Aurelio Vidmar looked to have put the ball into the bottom left corner of the net with a dinky low header, but Acevski again scrambled across to save and send the Knights back into attack.

Sabljak, so dominant in attack, now raced back into defence to break up a sizzling Zold/Alex Kiratoglou passing sequence. As the first half neared its end, both teams were stepping up the intensity. Matthew Kemp found his name in the ref's little black book for a late challenge on Joey Rajher.

The Knights came out pumped up for the second half, not giving City a sniff of the action in the opening minutes.

Lagati put in a match saving tackle on Kelic right in front of goal after the Knights' trickster had rounded Tobin and Cagalj two minutes in. Paul Urlovic was unlucky to see his shot on target cannon off one of his own players.

Then the pressure paid off. As City pushed forward, the Knights cleared with a long ball. Lagati slipped as he ran to cut out the danger. Urlovic and Nastevski grabbed the opportunity, knocking the ball between each other with only Lagati and Cagalj to beat. Urlovic drew Cagalj out then passed square to the right for Nastevski to shoot into the open goal: 1-0 Knights, and didn't the local Croatian supporters go mad!

True to form, City needed this wake-up call to get them going. Mori just failed to latch onto a superb Sabljak cross from the left, but Pelosi was there to back up. To the fans' disbelief, he skied his shot over the bar from 10 metres.

Three minutes later he missed another



Will Alex Tobin be playing Glory in the Grand Final? On current form anything is possible for the comeback kings Adelaide City Force.

sitter, shooting wide of the left post, then a minute later he hit the right post with a shot from a Vidmar cross!

The Knights fought back, Urlovic sending a shot over the bar from close range. City continued to pump in high balls for Pelosi and Mori, but Vukadin and Ante Kovacevic headed everything clear.

Vanis substituted playmaker Kelic with Hrvoje Matkovic in the 73rd minute, and four minutes later City's determination to score finally paid off.

Hassell sent Kemp away down the right, but Kemp's cross into the box for Pelosi was headed out. It fell to none other than Sabljak, who has probably had more shots on goal and misses than any other player in the NSL this season. He kept his cool to dodge three defenders and slam a shot into the bottom left hand corner: 1-1 and the roar from Hindmarsh could be heard in the corridors of Parliament House on North Terrace.

Matic subbed Cartwright with Nathan Day

who made an immediate impact. Six minutes later City had the ball in the net again in controversial circumstances.

Cagalj sent a long clearance almost to the opposite 18 yard line. Mori was offside in front of goal but ran back as Pelosi headed the ball wide for Kemp. With the Knights' defence caught square in the belief the whistle would blow, Kemp sped into the box and bulleted a shot past the stunned Acevski: 2-1 City and the stadium erupted again.

City had their tails up and nothing could stop them now. Two minutes into injury time, local hero Mori sealed his top goalscorer award with a gem. Sabljak sent in a low cross from the left, Pelosi flicked it on to Mori, and the 'goal machine' slotted the ball under Acevski: 3-1.

The Knights almost scored the final goal, but Cagalj dived to save on the line.

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Krncevic unimpressed by Marconi on finals eve

CANBERRA COSMOS 1

Clark 83.

MARCONI STALLIONS 1

Maloney 30.



Sunday afternoon at Bruce Stadium, Canberra. Crowd 2,586.

MATCH STATS:



CANBERRA COSMOS:

Konstantinou, Milin, Popovich, Purdue (Musitano 81), Castro, Hamilton, Prenzowski (James 69), Hooker, Clark, Roberts, De Jesus (Watkins 81).



MARCONI STALLIONS:

Turnbull, Babic M, Longo, Kim, Care (Smith 79), Maloney, Invincible, Farah, Renaud, Trajanovski, Zoric.

Yellows:

Cosmos: Milin 23, Castro 67.
Stallions: Care 67.

Best Players:

3. B. HAMILTON (COSMOS)
2. A. Clark (Cosmos)
1. A. Castro (Cosmos)

Referee: Jeremy Blaney

tion bullet.

"We did struggle a little bit today. It was very flat, but at the end of the day, I'm happy we're in the finals.

"We've had to do it the hard way. Look back three weeks ago, we were fighting for a spot in the top two... but we'll see what happens," he said.

Cosmos coach Tom Sermanni was glad that the season finished on a positive note.

"I thought we were unlucky to be down at halftime to be honest. I think we had the better of the chances and the more of the play, and more of the play throughout the whole game," he said.

Sermanni's side got off to a great start, putting Marconi under pressure from the start. Brian Hamilton controlled the mid-field for Canberra, turning in a superb game.

Andrew Clark was dynamic in his attacking forays into the forward line, and with Alex Castro, set up the Cosmos' first real chance.

On the right side, Clark crossed to Castro on the left side of the penalty area. Castro crossed back to Clarke, and made a run towards goal where he got in between the Marconi backs. Clark's pass back was safely deflected away by Buddy Farah.

In the 24th minute, Canberra's David Milin was given a yellow card for a heavy tackle. Two minutes later, Canberra were desperately unlucky not to go one-up. Paul Roberts centred the ball to Clark from the right of the penalty area. Clark volleyed into the underside of the crossbar as he tried to avoid a collision with Marconi keeper Michael Turnbull.

The ball bounced directly down and Pan-Kuen Kim cleared the ball off the line just ahead of a bunch of goal-hungry Cosmos players.

Four minutes later it was Marconi who finally scored, with their first decent chance. Kris Trajanovski got a run down the right side with Christian Care and Brad Maloney running goalward on his inside.

Trajanovski stopped, then crossed past Care to Maloney who slotted the ball past Canberra keeper Angelo Konstantinou into the left side of the net.

Ten minutes later, good scrambling defence by the Cosmos prevented Marconi from capitalizing on a 2-on-1.

Two minutes after that, Ilija Prenzowski of the Cosmos narrowly missed to the left after another good cross from Roberts.

Turnbull was turning out to be Marconi's best, saving many difficult chances.

While the Cosmos were still attacking throughout the second half, their final passes and general finishing was lacking.

In the 83rd minute, Canberra grabbed an equalizer and provided the game with a spark. Substitute Michael Musitano took a corner kick and fired it into the six-yard box.

Castro had a quick shot at goal which was deflected. Clarke pounced on the ball and put it into the left side of the net. Despite the Cosmos throwing everything at them in the final minutes, Marconi held on to secure their place in the top six.



Brad Maloney will be vital if Marconi can overcome Carlton in the Elimination Final.



Alex Castro: his form has been excellent since returning from injury.

By Nathan Long

The Marconi Stallions secured a finals match-up with Carlton following a 1-1 draw with the Canberra Cosmos at Bruce Stadium on Sunday.

Despite the result, the Cosmos had more chances and could have secured a team-record fourth straight win with a little more luck.

Marconi coach Eddie Krncevic was obviously a relieved man after dodging an elimina-

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We're getting there, says Culina

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 3

Cardozo 72, Emerton 86, Carle 90+.

SYDNEY UNITED 0

Sunday afternoon at Belmore Sports Ground, Sydney. Crowd: 5,233.



MATCH STATS:



SYDNEY OLYMPIC:

Perosh, Thomas,
Zoricich, Cardozo,
Emerton, Sinozic,
Mendez (Carle 67),
Kohler, Kyriazopoulos,
Zorbas (Tsekenis 60), Marusic
(Arambasic 80).



SYDNEY UNITED:

Hughes, Bozinovski,
Maric, Kupresak,
Palapanis (Rakic 80),
Genc (Deur 76), Moric,
Arrate, Pondeljak,
Bosevski (Pellegrino 75), Bosnar.

Yellow Cards:

United: Arrate 63, Genc 72, Maric 74.

Best Players:

3. SEBASTIAN SINOZIC (OLYMPIC)
2. Nick Carle (Olympic).
1. Ante Moric (United).

Referee: Gerry Connolly

By Ben Cubby

They left it fashionably late, but Sydney Olympic eventually overwhelmed cross-town rivals Sydney United 3-0 and confirmed their right to have a crack at the NSL championship.

The match had 'scoreless draw' written all over it until Olympic substitute Nick Carle burst onto the scene late in the second half.

The teenage striker set up two goals and scored the third himself, prompting coach Branko Culina, with tongue firmly in cheek, to afterwards brand the substitution "a masterstroke".

The visiting Pumas, playing for pride, battled away with gusto until Carle earned a penalty in the 73rd minute and initiated Olympic's dramatic late surge.

The tension was palpable at Belmore as the match got underway. Nothing less than a win would ensure a finals position for the home side, and the vocal crowd created an atmosphere worthy of the derby occasion.

Both sides started cautiously. Olympic saw fractionally more of the ball early on, but with the United backline guarding every yard of grass like Circular Quay real estate, space was at a premium.

The first real chance of the game fell to former Pumas star Kresimir Marusic in the 9th minute. Gabriel Mendez whipped in a corner, and Marusic saw his searing, first time volley tipped brilliantly over the bar by Brett Hughes.

Marusic then had a penalty claim turned down after he tangled with Hughes while pursuing a loose ball. It looked well worth appealing, but referee Gerry Connolly was rightly unim-

pressed with the histrionic swan dive that followed the alleged contact.

United caught Olympic on the hop several times through swift counter attacks. With Nick Bosevski playing a lone ranger role up front, though, the moves usually broke down before supporting players arrived.

The closest the visitors came in the first half, apart from a couple of long distance drifters, was a scuffed Bosevski shot in the 36th minute that was quickly scrambled to safety by the Olympic defence.

Just before half time, Mendez rounded Tom Maric on the right and lashed a low cross into the Pumas box. Marusic narrowly failed to make contact and John Kyriazopoulos, making his first start at Belmore, missed his chance of glory by smashing a shot high over the bar.

During the half time hiatus, news reached the crowd of seventh-placed Newcastle's drubbing at the hands of South Melbourne. A huge roar echoed around Belmore Oval and around Belmore itself.

Olympic seemed certain of a finals spot, but there was still so much to play for. On the sidelines, mobile phones ran hot for the remainder of the match as other results continually re-arranged the top six equation.

The Pumas started the second half as though they were hunting a championship instead of polishing the wooden spoon.

Tommy Pondeljak looked far sharper in the second period than he had in the first. He fired in an awkward, skidding shot in the 50th minute and had Olympic 'keeper John Perosh stretching to tip it clear.

Moments later, Aytek Genc ran onto a defence-splitting pass from Ante Moric, but Perosh did enough to make him fire just wide.

The next passage of play saw the lanky goalkeeper distinguish himself again, diving full length to hold a goalbound effort from Bosevski.

Carle replaced the tiring Mendez after 67 minutes and almost instantly sparked the home side out of their torpor.

His first touches saw him waltz around a couple of players and earn a free kick which Cardozo floated into the box. United hacked that effort out of the danger zone, but the ball quickly found its way back to Carle.

The former Joey with the South American style jinked his way to the byline once again and drilled a waist-level cross into the 18-yard box.

Velimir Kupresak committed a (rather dubious) handball defence that drew shouts of protest from the terraces. It looked unlucky rather than intentional from a distance, but Gerry Connolly, who had a good view of the incident, awarded the penalty. Cardozo stepped up in the 73rd minute and calmly sent Hughes the wrong way to make it 1-0 from the spot. His extravagant celebrations earned him a harsh word from the referee, but luckily no card - which could have meant suspension from a finals match.

Olympic exhibited a fresh lust for life (and goals) after Cardozo's 19th strike of the season. Zlatko Arambasic, another substitute who had a big impact on proceedings, received a

ball from Carle, turned on a five-cent piece and rifled a blistering shot just wide.

In the 89th, a pinball exchange of passes between Carle, Scott Thomas and Brett Emerton saw the latter burst through a knot of United defenders and come face to face with Hughes.

The 'keeper got his body in the way of the Olyroo captain's powerful shot but couldn't stop the ball from bouncing over the line. 2-0, and the crowd loved it.

Olympic, led by Carle and Arambasic, ran the demoralised Pumas ragged in the dying stages of the match. Hughes did well to turn Emerton's shot around the post in the 90th minute, after the winger had left everyone standing with a blockbusting run down the right.

Seconds later, a similar run from Arambasic took him to within a few paces of the United goal. Eddy Bosnar and Hughes seemingly had him closed down, but the striker executed an acrobatic flick-on (or was it an attempted shot?) for Carle, who headed number three into the back of a vacant net.

Nahuel Arrate almost grabbed a consolation for the Pumas deep into stoppage time, when he nipped in behind the retreating Olympic defence.

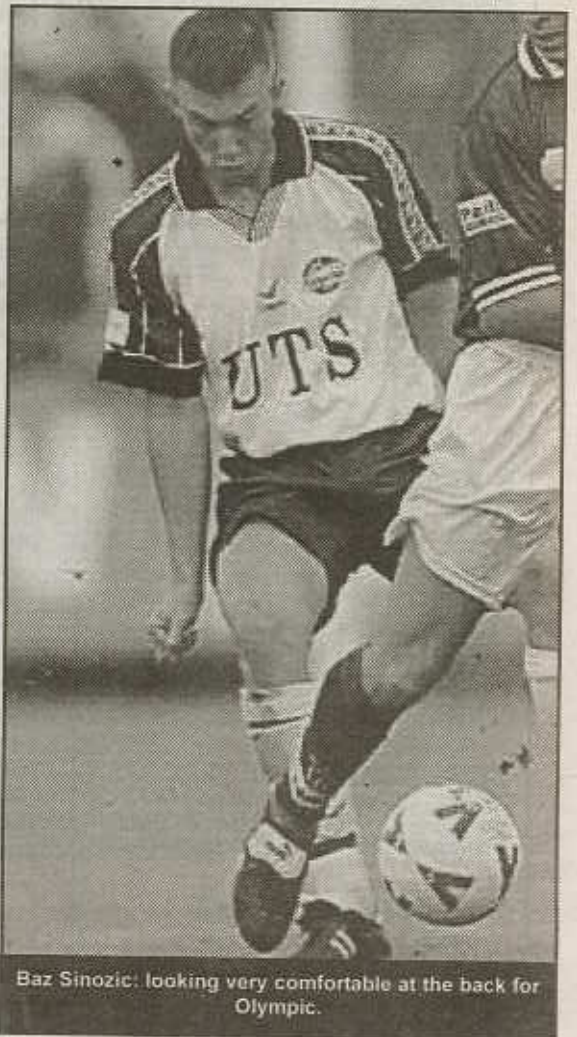
Perosh somehow managed to deflect the midfielder's goalbound shot around the post from point blank range.

United deserved a goal after their gutsy, disciplined performance, but the narrow miss was probably a more fitting epitaph for a season the team would rather forget.

The result lifts Olympic to fifth position and presents them with the daunting prospect of a two-legged elimination play-off against the Adelaide City Force.

For once-mighty Sydney United, of course, the result makes little difference. The club can take heart from the performances of Moric, Hughes and soon-to-retire veteran Velimir Kupresak, though, and in this match the side showed a lot of character.

Olympic were best served by the near faultless Sebastian Sinozic, who seems to much prefer playing sweeper to stopper. Apart from the dazzling Carle, Cardozo, Paul Kohler



Baz Sinozic: looking very comfortable at the back for Olympic.

and hard-working Scott Thomas did well for the home side.

'Caretaker' United coach Ivan Petkovic succinctly summed up the match by saying "good game, we had a couple of chances, the other team takes their chances, that's it."

"We came here to play soccer and to pick up points. We're not playing for anyone else. We played 60 minutes of good soccer, then after the penalty we lost confidence."

Sydney Olympic's Branko Culina (pictured left) suggested that a number of other teams would be nervous about facing his side during the finals.

"We're not as fluent as we would like to be, but we're getting there slowly, he said."



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Strikers to lose Joey Jewels to Europe?

BRISBANE STRIKERS 2

Stefanutto 14, Foster 61.

GIPPSLAND FALCONS 1

Vargas pen. 26.

Sunday afternoon at Suncorp Metway Stadium, Brisbane. Crowd 2,569.



MATCH STATS



BRISBANE STRIKERS: 1. Bolton, 2. Gwynne, 3. Stefanutto, 5. Bell (15. Webber 45'), 9. Foster, 10. Srhoj, 12. Dwyer, 14. North, 16. Grierson (11. Hews 74'), 19. Miner, 21. McKain. Sub not used: 8. Pilic.



GIPPSLAND FALCONS: 1. Jevdjovic, 2. Fak, 3. Gotis, 6. MacNicol, 7. Vargas, 8. Bell, 10. Robertson (19. Mandic 77'), 13. Savage, 16. Nilo, 17. Sekulovski (14. Marcina 38'), 18. Katz. Sub not used: 15. Buhagiar.

Yellows:

Brisbane: Matt Bell 25', Peter Grierson 38', Adam Webber 70'.

Falcons: Michael Katz 35', Juan Nilo 45'.

BEST PLAYER:

1. BOJO JEVDJEVIC (GIPPSLAND)
2. Shane Stefanutto (Brisbane)
3. Glenn Gwynne (Brisbane)

Referee: Con Diomis



Wayne Shroj: a firm favourite for best young player, he will trial in Germany.

By Cameron Atfield

The Brisbane Strikers capped off their rollercoaster season by defeating the Gippsland Falcons 2-1 at Suncorp Metway Stadium in what was a bittersweet victory for the early-season pacesetters.

The match was academic - neither side had any finals hopes - but that did not make for a dull and boring affair.

Both teams started off playing scrappy football and conceding possession on a number of occasions, but it was Brisbane that final-

ly stamped its authority on the match.

Russell Miner, the QAS graduate who heads the National Youth League scoring charts, almost set up Paul Foster in the 12th minute.

His low cross fell neatly in front of Foster, but the veteran striker did not have the legs to put it away.

Two minutes later the Strikers made amends for their missed opportunity when young defender Shane Stefanutto scored his first ever NSL goal.

He ran at the Falcons defence, beat two defenders and laid off to Foster for a quick one-two. Stefanutto made no mistake in slotting the ball past Gippsland keeper Bojo Jevdjovic.

The goal put wind up the sails of the Strikers, who launched raid after raid on the Falcons goal.

Scotsman Peter Dwyer found Foster in the area, who flicked a cheeky backheeled shot wide to the right of Jevdjovic's goal.

Wayne Srhoj, who will leave next week for trials in Germany, linked well with Miner and found himself in a one-on-one with the keeper. Jevdjovic did well to go low and smother his attack.

The Strikers' ascendancy came to a shuddering halt in the 26th minute when Matt Bell brought Brian MacNicol down in the area. Referee Con Diomis wasted no time pointing to the spot, and Andy Vargas duly converted the spot kick.

Despite numerous chances falling to the both sides over the next 20 minutes, the teams went in to the break locked at 1-all.

The Strikers played some great football in the second half and had several chances to break the deadlock.

Peter Grierson had his shot well blocked by Jevdjovic after an evasive run that saw him glide past several Falcons defenders.

Jevdjovic was again called into action barely a minute later when he pulled off a brilliant save to tip Foster's header over the bar.

Foster made amends in the 61st minute when he got on the end of some smart work by Srhoj.

The Joey did well to make his way into the area and fired his shot into the Gippsland defence, and Foster used his goalmouth instinct to fire home the shot.

Foster almost doubled his personal goal tally just a minute later, but yet again he found Jevdjovic in fine form, saving low to his left.

Foster did manage to beat Jevdjovic seconds later, but his subtle shot rebounded off the right post.

At the other end, Gippsland had half-hearted appeals for a goal when Bolton almost took the ball past the line, but referee Diomis was right on the spot to judge that the ball had not crossed the line.

Jevdjovic really earned his money in a man-of-the-match performance. The keeper pulled off brilliant saves to deny Srhoj and Miner before renewing his personal duel with Foster in the final minute of play.

Yet again, his acrobatics denied the former Hong Kong professional.

Despite the 2-1 victory, Brisbane coach John Kosmina said he was "gutted" about not being in the finals series, but could get a lot of positives out of what has been a real rollercoaster season for the former Champions.



Bojo Jevdjovic: finished the season off with a good performance at Suncorp for Falcons, who ended up second bottom with 29 points.

"It was a good way to finish the season for us," he said.

"We've played some decent football over the past few weeks, and if you look at the football we played tonight, we're good enough to be in the finals.

"We've been playing exceptional football."

Kosmina singled out Gippsland keeper Bojo Jevdjovic for praise.

"I thought their keeper made some great stops tonight. He kept them in the game," he said.

Gippsland coach Jeff Hopkins was a subdued figure after the match. He said the Falcons will need to rebuild if they are to be competitive next season.

"We'll need to improve the squad for sure by bringing in a few experienced players," he said.

"The depth of our squad really needs improvement, so that when we have players out with injuries and suspensions, we can cover those losses.

"That has been a big downfall this season."

The Strikers expect to lose Chay Hews in the off-season, who is heading for Sweden to get married and possibly continue his playing career there.

Clint Bolton and Glenn Gwynne are yet to put pen to paper for next season, and Brisbane's two Joeys could be on the way to VfB Stuttgart.

Kosmina said his team building for next season would depend on the outcomes of the trials and contract negotiations with current players.

"A lot will depend on what happens with Wayne Srhoj and Jade North," he said.

"I'd be surprised if Srhoj in particular didn't get picked up, and if they stay overseas we'll have to replace them and that will be very difficult.

"What we really need is another quality striker."

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Super Tuesday turns sour for Sterrey

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 0

PARRAMATTA POWER 1

Rnd 29 deferred Game



Griffiths 30 pen.

Tuesday night at Breakers Stadium, Newcastle. Crowd 4,759.

MATCH STATS



NEWCASTLE BREAKERS:

Catlin, Pryce (Dodd 70), Roberts, McManus, Sprod, Wilson (Tancheski 46), Wiecek, Owens (Smith 78), Harper, Moore.



PARRAMATTA POWER:

Smith, Santalab (Townsend 74), Eagleton, Burns, Griffiths, Berry (Thompson 83), Byrnes, Elrich, Gibson, Taliadoros (Roodenburg 46).

Yellow Cards:

Breakers: Pryce 45.
Parramatta: Griffiths 59.

Best Players:

3. STEVE EAGLETON (POWER)
2. Todd McManus (Breakers)
1. Mark Byrnes (Power)

Referee: Brett Hugo

set the tone for a frustrating night for the home side.

Twenty minutes later the Breakers had two other opportunities from headers in which Harper and Andy "The General" Roberts could not convert.

As thirty minutes passed Joel Griffiths earned the Power a penalty after he eluded two Newcastle defenders and coasted into the box, only to be brought down by Glenn Sprod, as Griffiths was heading away from goal.

Griffiths duly converted the penalty.

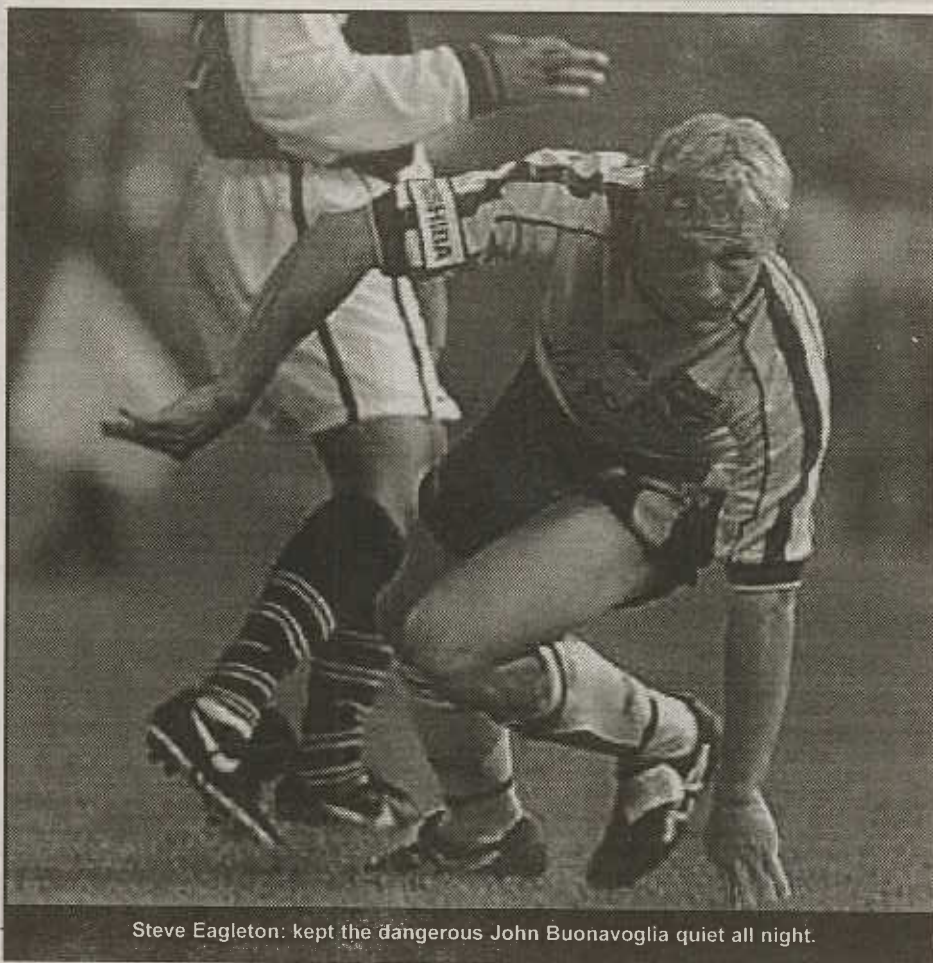
This stunned a far from confident Newcastle side and they looked out of touch for the rest of the half.

Parramatta could have snatched another goal when Kimon Taliadoros drilled a free kick into keeper Bob Catlin.

The Breakers came back from the orange



Mark Byrnes: another impressive showing by the Power youngster.



Steve Eagleton: kept the dangerous John Buonavoglia quiet all night.

break with a newfound purpose. Again it was Harper and Roberts who missed chances for the Breakers. Harper struck the crossbar from a narrow angle and Roberts shot over from a great opportunity.

Youngster Greg Owens went narrowly close for the home side when his shot forced a fingertip save from debutant Barney Smith.

The Breakers kept pressing all half, but it wasn't until the 72nd minute and 84th minute that Buonavoglia earned penalties, much to the delight of the Newcastle fans.

Michael Santalab and substitute Matt Thompson were the culprits with rash tackles on the diminutive striker.

Up stepped regular penalty taker Andy Harper who scored in his one other spot kick this year.

The first penalty crashed into the right hand post and the second went wide in the same direction - a sign that Harper was feeling the expectations of the Hunter on his broad shoulders.

Alas, Newcastle could not finish their last home game of the season with a victory for the very healthy midweek crowd of nearly five thousand.

It will need a miracle for Newcastle to make their first ever finals appearance and as you read this article you will know whether this miracle has occurred or not.

Either way this predominantly local-based team has made their supporters extremely proud of their character and efforts this season.

By Michael Kmet

Soccer can be a cruel. Just ask Andy Harper. The veteran striker has been one of the best players in the league this year and a revelation for the Breakers, yet it may ultimately be his two penalty misses in their deferred fixture against Parramatta that could send Newcastle crashing out of finals contention.

Rough justice indeed for a player so loved amongst the Newcastle faithful.

This love was clearly evident after the match as supporters flocked to Harper after the game to show their gratitude for his contribution to the best ever Breakers team that have taken the park.

All Harper could do was apologise to all who had a comforting word to Harper.

Sad and heart-breaking stuff.

Coach Lee Sterrey was philosophical about Harper's misses and the loss in which the Breakers clearly dominated, "It's cruel. He probably (Harper) put us in the position we are in the first place. It's pretty hard on an experienced player like him - what can you say?"

This was a game in which Newcastle dominated from the first whistle to the last against a Power side that was missing seven or eight star players.

Parramatta coach David Mitchell shuffled his side significantly, but it stood up to the Breakers' onslaught, particularly in defence.

Defender Steve Eagleton was particularly impressive in nullifying the dangerous Johnny Buonavoglia.

Eagleton's pace prevented "Jockey" from getting free all night.

Before Joel Griffith's 30th minute goal the Breakers had three terrific opportunities to hit the lead themselves.

As early as the third minute, Buonavoglia's half volley from a long-range free kick by Shane Pryce that just went wide,



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INSIDE JUNIOR SOCCER

Power grab championship in first season

Theo Katsaros reports that numerous postponed matches were played over the past week with some interesting results. The make-up of the final 4 remained a mystery right up until the final round.

Last Tuesday the Newcastle Breakers Colts recovered from a deficit at half time to defeat the Sydney United Colts at Breakers Stadium. The visitors led on 17 minutes as Paul Orlovic netted. The hosts came out firing in the second stanza and were rewarded with a penalty on 54 minutes. William Pryce converted to level the ledger. Two minutes later the Breakers took the lead when Alex Provost struck. On 67 minutes it was 3-1. Adam Hughes adding his name to the scoresheet. The match was sealed on full-time when Andrew Blanning collected the Breakers' fourth.

The A.I.S. travelled to Marconi Stadium and dented the home side's aspirations of a top two finish thanks to a single goal from Franco Parisi. The 6th minute goal was Parisi's 16th of the campaign.

The Newcastle Breakers dropped two vital points at home against the N.S.W.I.S. on Wednesday night. A 15th minute strike from Matthew Biggins handed the Institute the advantage and it was not until the 72nd minute that the Breakers drew level. Robert Angievski's scoring the equaliser.

The Breakers and the Stallions backed-up on Friday night at Marconi Stadium with both teams desperate for the points. The Stallions were hoping to sneak into second spot whilst the Breakers were struggling to secure a finals berth.

Newcastle gave themselves a chance of qualifying with a tough 3-2 victory. Robert Angievski scored a double for the victors and Chad Mansley chimed in with the other. In reply, Anthony Mondello and Grant Last recorded singles.

The Northern Spirit thumped the Wollongong Wolves Colts on Saturday as they prepare themselves for the finals series. The Spirit led after just 2 minutes via a Paul Wearne strike but struggled to add to their advantage in the first half.

However, five second half goals ruined the Wolves chances of causing an upset. Goals to Deryk Kane, Todd Macrae, David Brickel, an own goal and a second to Wearne capped off a vintage second half performance by the Spirit.

A brace from Sydney Olympic Academy youngster Sash Tirovski sunk the Sydney United Colts. A goal either side of the break was enough for the Olympians. The 2-0 win brought to an end an interesting season for the Academy and its first year coach George Paradisis.

On Sunday, the Q.A.S. and the A.I.S. played out a 1-1 draw. Alex Davani struck for the Q.A.S. after 55 minutes before Mislav Saric replied for the A.I.S.

Minor premiers Parramatta Power reached the magic 100 goal mark for the season as they defeated the Northern Spirit Colts. The 4-0 win caps off an amazing debut season for the Power.

Brendan Santalab's brace took his season tally to 17. Burim Ahmedi and Richard Plesa added singles.

At Belmore, Sydney Olympic clinched 4th place with a convincing 3-0 victory. Sydney United were no match for their desperate opponents. The win condemned the Newcastle Breakers to 5th place.

A 15th minute penalty from Anthony Doumanis gave Olympic a dream start. It was not until the second half that Olympic sealed the result. A 50th minute Lindsay Wilson strike was followed by a Dylan Macalister goal five minutes from time.

A 2-0 away win gave the Marconi Stallions a home final against Olympic. The victory over the A.C.T.A.S. sealed 3rd place for the Stallions.

A freakish own goal by goalkeeper Jacob Rex, and second half goals to Andrew Blanning and Adam Hughes helped the Newcastle Breakers Colts overcome the N.S.W.I.S. at Breakers Stadium.

Nick Stavroulakis and Gavin Hartge scored for the Institute but the last minute strike to Hughes stole a 3-2 win for the Breakers.

A lone goal

after 52 minutes from Paul Dimech gave the Wollongong Wolves maximum points from their battle against the Marconi Stallions Colts.

Congratulations to the Parramatta Power and their coach Paul McFadden on their fabulous debut season. Minor premiers of the National Youth League Northern Division. Also, a special mention for the leagues top marksman Russell Miner of the Q.A.S. who ended the season with 25 goals. Miner's impressive performance saw him elevated to the NSL as part of the Brisbane Strikers squad.

Chris Conti saw the re-arranged fixture between the ACT Academy of Sport and the Wollongong Youth team last Tuesday at the AIS Soccer Field.

It was a mild night weather-wise but both teams made it heat up with some forceful and at times furious football.

Wollongong took the lead in the 25th minute. Following a throw in on the left the Academy defence gave the ever-dangerous Esala Masi too much room and the Fijian international gave the Academy keeper Doug Hynson no chance from close range. Seven minutes later the ACT were level when Daniel Aliffi cut in with the ball from the left and from the edge of the area put the ball to the right of the despairing dive of Daniel Beltrame. Wollongong regained the lead just four minutes later when striker Daniel Aldridge copied Aliffi's strike but at the other end of the field. Both teams were playing some delightful football and it seemed that each team could score when they attacked. However, the Academy went to the interval level, when in the 38th minute, a through ball from the ACTAS skipper, Stephen Kemp was left by Aliffi to Paul Ivanic who belted the ball past Beltrame.

In the second half both teams turned on the pressure to go for the winning goal, and kept both keepers and defences busy. Eventually, in the 65th minute Kemp fed Ivanic on the left and he skipped down the wing, sending over a wicked cross-come-shot which eluded Beltrame and ended up in the Wollongong net. The ACT defended their lead very well by playing positive and attractive possession football, and could, indeed, have gone further ahead on a number of occasions.

ACTAS: Hynson, Agnello Ian Waldon, Dom La Butte, Stephen Kemp(capt), Matt Anstey (Amied Shadmaan), Alvaro Guzman, Steve Arnott (Yosef Zamora), Daniel Aliffi Goran Veljanovski, Paul Ivanic. Subs not used: Rade Kosanovic, Andrew Aliffi.

Wollongong Wolves Youth: Daniel Beltrame, Shane Lockhart, Neil Horlock, Steven Markovski, Nathan Thompson, Harvey Rodrigues, Justin Ashley (Leighal Dellis), Peter Lahanas, Esala Masi, Hay Lucas (Ian Burford), Daniel Aldridge. Sub not used: Scott Whalan.

Best Players:

ACTAS: Kemp, Guzman, Agnello.

Wollongong: Masi, Aldridge, Markovski.

NORTHERN DIVISION NYL

	P	W	D	B	L	F	A	Pts
PARRAMATTA POWER	32	25	4	2	3	100	22	79
Northern Spirit	32	23	4	2	5	98	39	73
Marconi Stallions	32	22	2	2	8	84	31	68
Sydney Olympic	32	20	6	2	6	93	45	66
Newcastle Breakers	32	20	4	1	8	70	37	64
A.I.S.	32	16	7	2	9	87	43	55
Q.A.S.	32	17	4	2	11	86	56	55
Wollongong Wolves	32	14	5	2	13	46	48	47
A.C.T.A.S.	32	11	9	2	12	49	59	42
Sydney United	32	13	3	2	16	46	61	42
Newcastle Colts	32	12	4	2	16	49	61	40
Olympic Academy	32	11	4	2	17	55	91	37
N.S.W.I.S.	32	9	8	2	15	49	53	35
Marconi Stallions Colts	32	7	5	2	20	43	97	26
Northern Spirit Colts	32	6	7	2	19	33	73	25
Sydney United Colts	32	4	5	2	23	31	84	17
Wollongong Colts	32	1	3	2	28	18	137	6

ROUND 32

Newcastle Colts 4	Sydney United Colts 1
Pryce 54' pen, Provost 56', Hughes 67', Blanning 90'	Orlovic 17'
A.C.T.A.S. 3	Wollongong Wolves 2
D Aliffi 32', Ivanic 38', 65'	Masi 25', Aldridge 36'
Marconi Stallions 0	A.I.S. 1
	Parisi 6'
Newcastle Breakers 1	N.S.W.I.S. 1
Angievski 72'	Biggins 15'
Marconi Stallions 2	Newcastle Breakers 3
Mondello 54', Last 86'	Angievski 27/75, Mansley 67
Wollongong Colts 0	Northern Spirit 6
	Wearne 2', 84', Kane 46', own goal 59', Macrae 74', Brickel 85'
Sydney United Colts 0	Syd. Olympic Academy 2
	Tirovski 32', 84'
Q.A.S. 1	A.I.S. 1
Davani 55'	Saric 69'
Parramatta Power 4	Northern Spirit Colts 0
B Santalab 39', 62', Ahmedi 80', Plesa 90'	
Sydney Olympic 3	Sydney United 0
Doumanis 15' pen, Wilson 50', Macalister 86'	
A.C.T.A.S. 0	Marconi Stallions 2
	(scorers unavailable)
Newcastle Colts 3	N.S.W.I.S. 2
own goal 32', Blanning 52', Stavroulakis 53', Hartge 84', Hughes 90'	
Marconi Stallions Colts 0	Wollongong Wolves 1
	Dimech 52'

NORTHERN DIVISION - Leading Scorers

Russell Miner	Q.A.S.	25
Daniel Severino	Marconi Stallions	20
Robert Angievski	Newcastle Breakers Youth/Colts	18
Brendan Santalab	Parramatta Power	17

SATURDAY 13 MAY 2000 - ELIMINATION SEMI FINAL

Marconi Stallions v Sydney Olympic (Marconi Stadium - 4.00pm)

SUNDAY 14 MAY 2000 - PRELIMINARY SEMI FINAL

Parramatta Power v Northern Spirit (Venue and kick off time to be announced)

By Roy Hay

In the match to decide the last place in the play-offs Melbourne Knights and Bulleen drew one-all at the Veneto Club, which was just enough to give Bulleen the vital spot on goal difference from South Dandenong.

The Knights scored first through Mark Paleka after half an hour and seemed to be in control, but Bulleen hit back just before the interval with a goal by Romano Ginesi. The second half was a slog as both sides tried to gain a decisive advantage, but in the end Bulleen just did enough to hold on for the vital draw.

Carlton hammered a young VIS team by four goals to nil to confirm the Blues minor premiership and demonstrate that it will be the team to beat in the play-offs. Two goals by Joshua Kennedy and singles by Angelo Mtsiopoulos and Marko Sintelli saw the Blues home.

Melbourne Knights Academy finished off its season with two excellent results. On Wednesday it drew two-all with South Melbourne in a postponed Round 4 match, a score which was enough to secure South Melbourne's hold on third spot on the ladder and qualification for the play-offs. Ian Callaghan and Elias Dimourtzidis, with his fifteenth of the season in Northern and Southern Divisions, scored for the Blues, while Ivan Mioc scored a double for the Academy.

On Friday the Academy came back from three-one down at the interval to snatch victory over Fawkner Blues in the last minute with a goal by Ivan Mioc, completing a brilliant week for the young striker.

Earlier Hrvoje Matkovic scored in 12 minutes but Fawkner dominated the first half with two goals by Carl Recchia and one by Robert Carchedi. When Carchedi, who had been the outstanding player on the field to that point, was sent off, the complexion of the game changed.

The fightback began after defender Frank Domic got his first goal of the season in 71 minutes, followed by the equaliser by Adrian Alamic in 76 minutes. Alamic has missed most of the season with injury, so this was a fine contribution by him which set up the grandstand finish in which Mioc snatched the victory for the Academy.

By this stage Fawkner was down to nine men after Paul Butera was injured and had to leave the field, but everyone agreed it was a stunning fight back by the Academy.

South Dandenong did its best to fight its way into the play-offs with a four-one away win over Albury Wodonga. Playing four men up front was coach Goran Runje's way of showing he meant business, but the Warriors might have taken an early lead when Carl Mills dallied on the ball with only the keeper to beat.

Viktor Memeti and skipped Lirim Rasimi got South Dandenong on its way with goals in 15 and 19 minutes, then a deflected shot made it three in 53 minutes. When the visitor had a player sent off the Warriors mounted a series of spirited attacks but were caught on the break by Fitim Ibrahim for a fourth goal for South Dandenong.

At last the Warriors got some reward for its pressure when Elliott Jones lobbed the ball over the keeper, and then Sam Chambers saved a penalty with a fine dive to his right. Had that gone in, then South Dandenong would have been in with a shout of the play-offs, but it was not to be.

Finally South Melbourne beat Gippsland Falcons by three goals to nil. It was a pretty straightforward affair with Wayne Spiteri putting away a penalty kick for South Melbourne and two goals by Jim Archimanditis. Coach John Kennedy was pleased with the way his youth team performed and the Blues can't wait for the finals to start.

SOUTHERN DIVISION NYL

South Melbourne 2	Melb Knights Acad. 2
Callaghan, Dimourtzidis	Mioc 2
Melb Knights Acad. 4	Fawkner Blues 3
Matkovic, Domic,	Recchia 2, Carchedi
Mioc, Alamic	
VIS 0	Carlton 4
	Kennedy 2, Mtsiopoulos, Sintelli
Albury Wodonga 1	South Dandenong 4
Jones	Rasimi 2, Ibrahim, Memeti
South Melbourne 3	Gippsland Falcons 0
Archimanditis 2, Spiteri	
Bulleen Inter 1	Melbourne Knights 1
Ginesi	Paleka

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Carlton	20	16	4	0	75	11	52
VIS	20	14	2	4	57	19	44
South Melbourne	20	12	3	5	55	21	39
Bulleen Inter Kings	20	10	3	7	48	35	33
South Dandenong	20	10	3	7	41	33	33
Melbourne Knights	20	9	4	7	51	43	31
Gippsland Falcons	20	8	4	8	41	43	28
Knights Academy	20	6	3	11	25	39	21
Fawkner Blues	20	4	3	13	24	57	15
Albury Wodonga	20	3	3	14	23	68	12
Preston Lions	20	1	2	17	16	87	5

Super League Summary

This Saturday will see the much anticipated clash between Blacktown and Bonnyrigg, at the home of the White Eagles.

With the teams only one point apart before last weekend, Blacktown saw their fixture against St George washed-out and had the added bonus of their traditional rivals suffering a shock 3-1 loss to Parramatta Eagles at Melita Stadium.

Malcolm Meilak, Anthony Mittiga and Adam Anderson all got themselves on the scoresheet for Parramatta while defender Sasha Utjesenovic added some respectability to the scoreline for Bonnyrigg.

At Henson Park, Jim Patikas' Canterbury Marrickville bounced back into form with a good win over Macarthur Rams, with Abbas Saad

12 for the season.

The win also keeps Fairfield's chances alive and, having missed out on Summer League starting in November this year, the Bulls have plenty to prove to the teams above them.

In the battle of the cellar dwellers, Sutherland Sharks and Manly Warringah played out a 1-1 draw at Seymour Shaw Park.

Manly's best player on the night, Mark Beldham, gave his side the lead in the 63rd minute when he turned and shot past Dennes Olla. As the clock wound down, it seemed that Beldham's strike had secured the points for Manly, but the

never-say-die Sharks, led by hard-working midfielder Wayne Gibson, equalised with just three minutes of normal time remaining, with Con Paradisis banging home a penalty.



Super League top scorers

MARK HAGGER	BLACKTOWN	18
STEVE KARAVATAKIS	LEICHHARDT	16
COLIN LUFF	BONNYRIGG	16
JIMMY ASCHNER	EASTERN SUBURBS	15
JOHNNY GHISIO	BONNYRIGG	15
ADAM ANDERSON	PARRAMATTA	14
MATTHEW BORG	FAIRFIELD	12
JIM BAKIS	ST GEORGE	11

(pictured below) scoring a goal in each half to come out 2-0 winners.

Canterbury Marrickville looked dangerous in front of goal throughout, and the win keeps them in touch with the top five, but needing to string a few consecutive wins together.

Central Coast also kept their



Leichhardt Tigers had an anticipated 1-0 win over Eastern Suburbs with captain Steve Karavatakis scoring the only goal in the 20th minute.

While next Saturday's showdown between Bonnyrigg and Blacktown could well be the premiership decider, there are interesting tests for Central Coast against St George at St George Stadium, and for Canterbury Marrickville against Leichhardt at Lambert Park in the inner-west local derby.

The big First Division game at Mona Park was won by Dulwich Hill 4-0 over Auburn United who offered stiff resistance despite the scoreline indicating otherwise.

The woodwork saved both sides in the first half which was scoreless and it took a brilliant Eric Hristodoulou free kick to break the deadlock which opened the game to further scoring from goal-machine Louis Dounis, who grabbed two in succession, before substitute Rabeh Nasser stabbed home the fourth in the 90th minute.

Fraser Park, meanwhile, went down 3-1 at home to Hurstville City Minotaurs who ran and tackled hard all day and silenced a large and vocal home crowd in the 7 pm game.

Manuel Sarikakis put Hurstville ahead in the 10th and Damian Rosenthal levelled in the 20th, but a superb move began by Huseyin Bayhan was finished by Nick Andreau to restore Hurstville's lead in the 58th and the last nail went in during stoppage time when Bayhan took on the defence and scored the third with a brilliant piece of individual skill.

The Second Division game at St Pauls College was won by the visitors Mount Pritchard over Sydney University 1-0 with a Peter Vrlc 14th minute header settling the issue.

None of the home sides managed a win in the top three divisions on the first day of the weekend programme.

finals chances alive by managing a draw against the lowly Penrith Panthers. Penrith twice led, and were twice clawed back in a game which they dominated but were unable to capitalise on.

Shane Knight scored the 87th minute life-saver for the Coasties in a welcome return after a long lay-off from injury (see full match report on page 21).

Despite a slow start, Fairfield had another impressive victory - this week a 3-0 win at home against Bankstown.

George Zabetakis opened the scoring for the home side and Matthew Borg chimed in with two more, the second a superb drive from outside the box, to bring his personal goal tally to

NSW RESULTS

FEDERATION DIVISION ONE: FIRST GRADE: Fraser Park 1 (D Rosenthal 13m) Hurstville City 3 (N Andreou 5m M Sarikakis 53m H Bayhan 83m), Auburn United 0 Dulwich Hill 4 (E Hristodoulou 50m L Dounis 66/81m R Nasser 90m), Hajduk Wanderers 2 (J Ellul 2m J Anderson 26m) Ryde City Gunners 1 (R Portelli 60m), Bathurst 75 1 (D Steptoe 70m) Illawarra Lions 3 (M Soper 54m D McCann 58m K Kotevski 76m), MSC Liverpool 1 (B Hewitt 60m) AC United 3 (D Oliverio 25m C Holbrook 50m A Araujo 52m), Stanmore Hawks 2 (A Larra 44m M Rositano 66m) Rockdale City Suns 1 (S Naydoski 69m). **UNDER 21:** Fraser Park 3 Hurstville City 1, Auburn United 0 Dulwich Hill 2, Hajduk Wanderers 1 Ryde City Gunners 0, Bathurst 75 1 Illawarra Lions 0, MSC Liverpool 0 AC United 0, Stanmore Hawks 1 Rockdale City Suns 0. **UNDER 18:** Fraser Park 1 Hurstville City 2, Auburn United 0 Dulwich Hill 2, Hajduk Wanderers 1 Ryde City Gunners 0, Bathurst 75 10 Illawarra Lions 0, MSC Liverpool 2 AC United 2, Stanmore Hawks 2 Rockdale City Suns 0.

FEDERATION DIVISION TWO: FIRST GRADE: Sydney University 0 Mt Pritchard 1, White City 3 Sydney District 1, Hakoah 2 Greystanes 3, Hills United Mt Druitt Town Rangers Washed Out, Hurstville ZSC 4 Central Coast Lakers 1, Belmore Hercules 0 University of NSW 1. **UNDER 21:** Sydney University 2 Mt Pritchard 1, White City 1 Sydney District 2, Hakoah 3 Greystanes 3, Hills United Mt Druitt Town Rangers Washed Out, Hurstville ZSC 2 Central Coast Lakers 0, Belmore Hercules 2 University of NSW 3. **UNDER 18:** Sydney University 0 Mt Pritchard 4, White City Sydney District Washed Out, Hakoah 2 Greystanes 4, Hills United Mt Druitt Town Rangers Washed Out, Hurstville ZSC 3 Central Coast Lakers 2, Belmore Hercules 1 University of NSW 3.

FEDERATION DIVISION THREE: FIRST GRADE: Prospect United 3 Liverpool City 1, Nepean District Balmain Washed Out, Liverpool City 4 The Wanderers 6, Parramatta City 4 Colo Colo 4, Camden Tigers 1 Prospect United 2, Western Sydney Lions 3 Holy Cross Ryde 0, Trasandinos 0 Prairiewood United 5. **RESERVE GRADE:** Prospect United 4 Liverpool City 0, Nepean District Balmain Washed Out, Liverpool City 0 The Wanderers 3, Parramatta City 2 Colo Colo 4, Camden Tigers 0 Prospect United 3, Western Sydney Lions 2 Holy Cross Ryde 2, Trasandinos 1 Prairiewood United 2.

FEDERATION DIVISION FOUR: FIRST GRADE: Kellyville Kolts 0 United Eagles 1, Springwood 3 Sporting SCC 2, Hawkesbury City 11 Maroubra United 1, Auburn Star 0 Granville Greenisland 1, CSI Schofields Marrickville Washed Out, Eastern Creek Pioneers Sydney Crescent Star Washed Out. **RESERVE GRADE:** Kellyville Kolts 0 United Eagles 1, Springwood 3 Sporting SCC 1, Hawkesbury City 3 Maroubra United 2, Auburn Star 1 Granville Greenisland 2, CSI Schofields Marrickville Washed Out, Eastern Creek Pioneers Sydney Crescent Star Washed Out.

FEDERATION DIVISION FIVE: FIRST GRADE: Bossy 4 Kosciusko 1, Lithgow Workmen 3 Birrong Sports 0, Hinchinbrook Juniors 1 Fairfield City 4, Liverpool Olympic 0 Western Sydney Passion 9, UTS 3 Petersham 0. **RESERVE GRADE:** Bossy 3 Kosciusko 3, Lithgow Workmen 3 Birrong Sports 1, Hinchinbrook Juniors 0 Fairfield City 3 (Win by Forfeit), Liverpool Olympic 7 Western Sydney Passion 0, UTS 1 Petersham 1.

WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE: FIRST GRADE: NSW Academy Manly Warringah Dolphins Washed Out, Macarthur Rams 0 Marconi 8, Wollongong Wolves 1 Northern NSW/HAS 3, Sutherland Sharks 2 Nepean Association 1, Gladesville Ravens Central Coast Lakers Washed Out. **GRADE 21:** Macarthur Rams 0 Marconi 5, Wollongong Wolves 1 Northern NSW/HAS 4, Sutherland Sharks 9 Nepean Association 0, Gladesville Ravens Central Coast Lakers Washed Out.

WOMENS STATE LEAGUE: FIRST GRADE: Roselands Raptors 5 UTS 1, Bathurst City 3 UTS 1, Roselands Raptors 1 Hajduk Wanderers 5, Inter Lions 0 Gladesville Hornsby Koalas 7. **GRADE 19:** Bathurst City 2 UTS 3, Roselands Raptors 2 Hajduk Wanderers 4, Inter Lions 0 Gladesville Hornsby Koalas 7.

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: GRADE 13: Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1 Macarthur Rams 1, Manly Warringah Dolphins 1 Penrith Panthers 0, Bankstown City 0 Leichhardt Tigers 1, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 0 Marconi Stallions 1, Fairfield Bulls 2 Sydney Olympic 7, Sutherland Sharks 3 Sydney United 2, Wollongong Wolves Northern Spirit Washed Out, Newcastle Breakers Bonnyrigg White Eagles Washed Out, Central Coast Coasties 0 Macarthur Rams 1, St George 2 Blacktown City 3, Canterbury Marrickville 1 Parramatta Eagles 7. **GRADE 14:** Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2 Macarthur Rams 0, Manly Warringah Dolphins 4 Penrith Panthers 1, Bankstown City 1 Leichhardt Tigers 2, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 2 Marconi Stallions 4, Fairfield Bulls 1 Sydney Olympic 3, Sutherland Sharks 2 Sydney United 2, Wollongong Wolves Northern Spirit Washed Out, Newcastle Breakers Bonnyrigg White Eagles Washed Out, Central Coast Coasties 1 Macarthur Rams 4, St George 1 Blacktown City 1, Canterbury Marrickville 3 Parramatta Eagles 5. **GRADE 15:** Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2 Macarthur Rams 0, Manly Warringah Dolphins 3 Penrith Panthers 0, Bankstown City 0 Leichhardt Tigers 3, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 0 Marconi Stallions 11, Fairfield Bulls 1 Sydney Olympic 3, Sutherland Sharks 0 Sydney United 3, Wollongong Wolves Northern Spirit Washed Out, Newcastle Breakers Bonnyrigg White Eagles Washed Out, Central Coast Coasties 2 Macarthur Rams 2, St George 1 Blacktown City 0, Canterbury Marrickville 0 Parramatta Eagles 2.

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE: GRADE 13: Rockdale City Suns 0 Southern Branch 2, AC United Blacktown Association Washed Out, Illawarra Lions 2 Ryde City 2, Mt Pritchard 0 Hills United 4, Hajduk Wanderers Stanmore Hawks Washed Out, Nepean Association Canterbury Association Washed Out, Rockdale City Suns 6 Canterbury Association 1, Stanmore Hawks 2 Southern Branch 11, Mt Pritchard 2 Illawarra Lions 5. **GRADE 14:** Rockdale City Suns 2 Southern Branch 1, AC United Blacktown Association Washed Out, Illawarra Lions 4 Ryde City 1, Mt Pritchard 0 Hills United 0, Hajduk Wanderers Stanmore Hawks Washed Out, Nepean Association Canterbury Association Washed Out, Rockdale City Suns 2 Canterbury Association 1, Stanmore Hawks 2 Southern Branch 2, Mt Pritchard 1 Illawarra Lions 1. **GRADE 15:** Rockdale City Suns 0 Southern Branch 4, AC United Blacktown Association Washed Out, Illawarra Lions 3 Ryde City 4, Mt Pritchard 0 Hills United 1, Hajduk Wanderers Stanmore Hawks Washed Out, Nepean Association Canterbury Association Washed Out, Rockdale City Suns 1 Canterbury Association 1, Stanmore Hawks 1 Southern Branch 3, Mt Pritchard 0 Illawarra Lions 2. **GRADE 16:** Rockdale City Suns 0 Southern Branch 6, AC United Blacktown Association Washed Out, Illawarra Lions 3 Ryde City 1, Mt Pritchard 1 Hills United 2, Hajduk Wanderers Stanmore Hawks Washed Out, Nepean Association Canterbury Association Washed Out, Rockdale City Suns 0 Canterbury Association 3 (Win By Forfeit), Stanmore Hawks 0 Southern Branch 2, Mt Pritchard 1 Illawarra Lions 2.

DIVISION TWO YOUTH LEAGUE: GRADE 13: Mt Druitt Town Rangers Camden Tigers Washed Out, MSC Liverpool Central Coast Lakers Washed Out, Ku-Ring-Gai Association CSI Schofields Washed Out, Hurstville City 6 Granville Association 1, Hawkesbury City Parramatta City Washed Out, Central Coast Lakers 4 CSI Schofields 0. **GRADE 14:** Mt Druitt Town Rangers Camden Tigers Washed Out, MSC Liverpool Central Coast Lakers Washed Out, Ku-Ring-Gai Association CSI Schofields Washed Out, Hurstville City 2 Granville Association 3, Hawkesbury City Parramatta City Washed Out, Central Coast Lakers 1 CSI Schofields 0. **GRADE 15:** Mt Druitt Town Rangers Camden Tigers Washed Out, MSC Liverpool Central Coast Lakers Washed Out, Ku-Ring-Gai Association CSI Schofields Washed Out, Hurstville City 2 Granville Association 6, Hawkesbury City Parramatta City Washed Out, Central Coast Lakers 3 CSI Schofields 1. **GRADE 16:** Mt Druitt Town Rangers Camden Tigers Washed Out, MSC Liverpool Central Coast Lakers Washed Out, Ku-Ring-Gai Association CSI Schofields Washed Out, Hurstville City 0 Granville Association 5, Hawkesbury City Parramatta City Washed Out, Central Coast Lakers 3 CSI Schofields 1.

SUPER CADET LEAGUE: GRADE 11: Central Coast Coasties Macarthur Rams Washed Out, Manly Warringah Dolphins 2 Penrith Panthers 0, Bankstown City 0 Leichhardt Tigers 3, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 1 Marconi Stallions 2, Fairfield Bulls 0 Sydney Olympic 6, Sutherland Sharks 1 Sydney United 1, Wollongong Wolves 1 Northern Spirit 0, St George 1 Blacktown City 2, Canterbury Marrickville 0 Parramatta Eagles 4. **GRADE 12:** Central Coast Coasties Macarthur Rams Washed Out, Manly Warringah Dolphins 4 Penrith Panthers 0, Bankstown City 0 Leichhardt Tigers 0, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 1 Marconi Stallions 4, Fairfield Bulls 0 Sydney Olympic 9, Sutherland Sharks 2 Sydney United 0, Wollongong Wolves 2 Northern Spirit 0, St George 1 Blacktown City 2, Canterbury Marrickville 2 Parramatta Eagles 0.

CADET LEAGUE DIVISION ONE: GRADE 11: Central Coast Lakers 0 Hajduk Wanderers 0, AC United 0 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 3, MSC Liverpool 0 Central Coast Lakers 4, CSI Schofield Illawarra Lions Washed Out, Hajduk Wanderers 1 Hurstville City 0, Hawkesbury City 1 Hills United 1, Stanmore Hawks 1 Mt Pritchard 4, Ryde City 3 Parramatta City 0, Rockdale City Suns 0 MDSFA Cadets 2. **GRADE 12:** Central Coast Lakers 2 Hajduk Wanderers 1, AC United 3 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 0, MSC Liverpool 1 Central Coast Lakers 4, CSI Schofields Illawarra Lions Washed Out, Hajduk Wanderers 2 Hurstville City 0, Hawkesbury City 3 Hills United 1, Stanmore Hawks 6 Mt Pritchard 0, Ryde City 1 Parramatta City 2, Rockdale City Suns 0 MDSFA Cadets 2.

Knight saves the day at wet Pluim Park

CENTRAL COAST COASTIES 2

Ritchie 42, Knight 84.

PENRITH PANTHERS 2

Hinton 16, Ackerley 61.

Saturday afternoon at Pluim Park, Central Coast.



Peter Ritchie broke the Coasties' recent goal drought with a low drive from ten metres out for the equaliser.

Just after half time a downpour hit Pluim Park which sent the crowd scattering for cover and although, luckily, it only lasted five minutes but it turned the greasy pitch into an

ice skating rink.

Paul Roberts put through a ball to an unmarked Stuart Sontag and with an open goal from eight metres out he stumbled and regained the ball but it gave Necesi the time to smother the shot.

Penrith went up the other end through a good team move and Chris Ackerley made up for his first half disappointment with a goal that put the Panthers back in the lead at the 60th minute mark.

Both teams made changes with Coasties bringing on Nathan Byrn and Knight while the Panthers brought on Fitzsimmons and Buckpitt.

After such a long time out with injury Knight immediately showed he had recovered with a number of strong runs down the left hand sideline.

With six minutes to go Coasties got a free kick 20 metres out from the Panthers goal. Knight took the kick and his low drive skidded across the penalty area with Necesi appearing to have it covered but somehow it got under him for the equaliser.

Penrith was disappointed as they probably did enough for an upset win but the Coasties are still hanging in there although the final five chances are slowly disappearing.

CENTRAL COAST COASTIES:

Meier, Matthews, Steele, Drysdale, Marshall (Surridge), Roper, Daley (Byrn) Roberts (Knight), Hokin, Ritchie, Sontag.

PENRITH PANTHERS: Necevski, A. Driene,

Sweeney, Davies, Wright, S. Casserly (Buckpitt), B. Casserly, Ackerley (Fitzsimmons), Hinton, M. Driene, Picken.

Yellows:

Coasties: Drysdale.
Panthers: M. Driene, Wright.

Best Player:

Coasties: Ritchie, Roper, Steele.
Panthers: Necevski, Hinton, M. Driene.



Whilst again held to a draw at home by a lowly placed team the Central Coast Coasties generally had good news after their fixture against Penrith Panthers at Pluim Park last Saturday night.

Most importantly Shane Knight and Peter Preston made comebacks after lengthy absences due to injury and both appeared to come through unscathed.

Secondly, and nearly as important, they scored two goals from only six chances in a match that for once they did not dominate.

Preston played three quarters of the match in the Under 21 team, which was obviously intended to see if his leg injury could stand up to match playing and also to give him match fitness. Knight came on with twenty minutes to go in first grade and scored the Coasties' late equaliser.

The match itself was an unattractive affair played on a slippery pitch following several days of heavy rain. With only six goal attempts from the Coasties and seven from Penrith, one can see that it was more of a midfield battle rather than all out attack.

The first real attempt to score came after fourteen minutes when Marcus Steele fired a 25 metre dive past the Penrith goal. A good move by Penrith then saw Danny Hinton put the ball in the net only to be given offside.

Two minutes later Hinton made amends when he slipped the ball past Gary Meier in the Coasties goal, saw his goal-bound shot partially cleared by Sean Matthew, picked up the rebound to give Penrith the lead.

Penrith then earned a corner which Meier punched clear with the ball going to Steve Sweeney who blasted over the bar from eight metres.

Coasties then got a free kick which resulted in Mitchell Daley putting over a good ball across the Penrith goal only to see onrushing Carl Roper arrive half a second too late.

Three minutes later Penrith received another free kick just outside the penalty area. Martin Driene drove a vicious kick only to see Meier make another fine save.

Coasties then had an attempt at goal but Dane Hokin's blistering shot saw Penrith goalkeeper Ivan Necevski repeat Meier's efforts. Just before the interval the Coasties had a great move from halfway and

Super League Tables

FIRST GRADE:	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES	18	13	0	5	51	32	39	19
Blacktown City Demons	17	12	2	3	49	15	38	34
Leichhardt Tigers	17	11	2	4	39	26	35	13
St George Saints	17	10	3	4	31	20	33	11
Parramatta Eagles	18	7	9	2	39	27	30	12
Central Coast Coasties	17	6	6	5	28	22	24	6
Fairfield Bulls	18	7	3	8	31	30	24	1
Canterbury Marrickville	18	8	0	10	27	40	24	-13
Bankstown City Lions	18	5	5	8	23	27	20	-4
Eastern Subs Wanderers	18	6	1	11	31	41	19	-10
Macarthur Rams	18	4	5	9	21	28	17	-7
Sutherland Sharks	18	4	3	11	21	44	15	-23
Penrith Panthers	17	4	3	10	18	41	15	-23
Manly Warringah Dolphins	17	2	6	9	18	34	12	-16

UNDER 21	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
CENTRAL COAST COASTIES	17	11	2	4	32	17	35	15
Blacktown City Demons	16	10	4	2	39	18	34	21
Penrith Panthers	17	10	1	6	31	23	31	8
Leichhardt Tigers	16	9	3	4	35	21	30	14
Parramatta Eagles	18	7	4	7	25	24	25	1
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	18	6	5	7	31	27	23	4
Manly Warringah Dolphins	17	7	2	8	33	35	23	-2
Eastern Subs Wanderers	18	6	5	7	28	33	23	-5
Macarthur Rams	18	7	2	9	25	33	23	-8
St George Saints	17	6	4	7	27	28	22	-1
Canterbury Marrickville	18	6	2	10	28	39	20	-11
Sutherland Sharks	18	5	5	8	26	39	20	-13
Fairfield Bulls	18	5	4	9	28	38	19	-10
Bankstown City Lions	18	3	5	10	32	45	14	-13

UNDER 18	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
PARRAMATTA EAGLES	18	13	2	3	53	22	41	31
Fairfield Bulls	18	13	1	4	36	20	40	16
Blacktown City Demons	16	10	5	1	31	12	35	19
Leichhardt Tigers	15	10	2	3	37	22	32	15
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	18	8	3	7	29	28	27	1
Central Coast Coasties	17	7	3	7	33	24	24	9
Penrith Panthers	17	5	8	4	30	22	23	8
Sutherland Sharks	18	6	5	7	27	24	23	3
Macarthur Rams	17	6	5	6	26	24	23	2
Bankstown City Lions	18	6	3	9	26	33	21	-7
Eastern Subs Wanderers	18	4	5	9	24	45	17	-21
St George Saints	17	3	5	9	22	50	14	-28
Manly Warringah Dolphins	17	3	2	12	17	32	11	-15
Canterbury Marrickville	18	1	3	14	13	46	6	-33

SUPER LEAGUE ROUND NINETEEN

Official clothing supplier to the NSW Soccer Federation

Saturday 13 May

Bonnyrigg W. E v Blacktown City v - Serbian Centre

Games 7.00pm (1st grade) - 5.00pm (21s) - 3.00pm (18s)

Macarthur Rams v Parramatta Eagles - Lynwood Park

Games 7.00pm (1st grade) - 5.00pm (21s) - 3.00pm (18s)

Sunday 14 May

St George v Central Coast - St George Stadium

Games 3.00pm (1st grade) - 1.00pm (21s) - 11.00am (18s)

Penrith Panthers v Sutherland Sharks - Andrews Road

Games 6.00pm (1st grade) - 4.00pm (21s) - 2.00pm (18s)

Leichhardt Tigers v Canterbury M'ckville - Lambert Park

Games 3.00pm (1st grade) - 1.00pm (21s) - 11.00am (18s)

Manly Warringah v Fairfield Bulls - Cromer Park

Games 3.00pm (1st grade) - 1.00pm (21s) - 11.00am (18s)

Bankstown City Lions v Eastern Suburbs - Jensen Park

Game 3.00pm (1st grade) - 1.00pm (21s) - 11.00am (18s)

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SUPER LEAGUE RESULTS

FIRST GRADE

CENTRAL COAST COASTIES 2

P Ritchie 42m S Knight 87m

PENRITH PANTHERS 2

D Hinton 16m C Ackerley 61m

SUTHERLAND SHARKS 1

C Paradis 85m penalty

MANLY WARRINGAH DOLPHINS 1

M Beidham 63m

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS v ST GEORGE

SAINTS - POSTPONED

PARRAMATTA EAGLES 3

M Meilak 18m A Mittiga 21m A Anderson 50m

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES 1

S Utjesenovic 42m

CANTERBURY MARRICKVILLE 2

A Saad 14m/68m

MACARTHUR RAMS 0

FAIRFIELD BULLS 3

G Zabetakis 14m M Borg 44/86m

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS 0

EASTERN SUBURBS 0

LEICHHARDT TIGERS 1

S Karavatakis 20m

UNDER 21:

Central Coast Coasties 0

Sutherland Sharks 0

Blacktown City Demons

Parramatta Eagles 0

Canterbury Marrickville 1

Fairfield Bulls 2

Eastern Suburbs 0

UNDER 18:

Central Coast Coasties 1

Sutherland Sharks 4

Blacktown City Demons

Parramatta Eagles 3

Canterbury Marrickville 2

Fairfield Bulls 2

Eastern Suburbs 0

Penrith Panthers 1

Manly Warringah 4

St George Saints(WO)

Bonnyrigg W Eagles 4

Macarthur Rams 2

Bankstown City 2

Leichhardt Tigers 2

WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE ROUND ELEVEN RESULTS

FIRST GRADE:

NSW Academy

Macarthur Rams 0

Wollongong Wolves 1

Sutherland Sharks 2

Gladesville Ravens

GRADE 21:

Macarthur Rams 0

Wollongong Wolves 1

Sutherland Sharks 9

Gladesville Ravens

Manly Warringah(WO)

Marconi 8

Northern NSW/HAS 3

Nepean Association 1

Central Coast(WO)

Marconi 5,

Northern NSW/HAS 4,

Nepean Association 0,

Central Coast (WO)

The team you never hear about at Central Coast

By Ray Sandell

In most soccer clubs, and any sporting club for that matter, the publicity always seems to centre, perhaps understandably, around the players and coaches.

Whether the club is successful, or otherwise, not many people know of, or hear about, the people behind the scenes who are a vital part of the running of any sporting organisation.

In most clubs the only people known to the general public and club supporters, outside of the players and coaches, are the club president, secretary and treasurer, and in some instances their identities are unknown.

Every successful club needs a team of hard working people who, in most parts, carry out the duties for the love of their sport and club - unpaid, mostly unrewarded and in a lot of cases unacknowledged.

Take the Central Coast Coasties for example. They are having their most successful season in all three grades since being promoted to the NSW Super League three years ago.

All three teams are still well in the running for semi final spots with the Under 21 team on top of their competition and involved in a two way battle with the always strong Blacktown City for the minor premiership.

A lot of the Coasties' success this season can be attributed to the club's team of back-room boys, and girls.

Each team needs a manager and a trainer. The title 'team manager' should really be changed to 'team nurse'.

Consider his or her duties: Most good managers attend all training sessions, in the case of the Coasties at least twice a week. The manager is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of all training equipment, balls,

cones, players bibs, drink bottles, suitably kept filled (with water, of course), flags and any other training devices the coach may require.

This person is expected to keep a record of training attendances, take telephone calls from players who are unable to attend training, listen to all sorts of excuses why a player can't get there and generally act as nurse and maid.

On match day he/she has to ensure the team's two playing strips, the second in case of a colour clash, are in good order, the match balls meet the referee's requirements, the playing pitch, nets and corner flags are correct, again (for pedantic referees!) and the teamsheet is filled in correctly by both teams and handed to the referee on time.

He/she can then sit on the substitute bench and watch the match - except of course when he is not jumping up and down organising players on the bench to warm up, ready to go on the field of play, inform the assistant referee of any substitutions to be made, prepare the half time refreshments and listen to the complaints of the player who has been substituted!

When the match is over the manager could have a rest and a refreshing beer ... yet she/he still has to collect the players' dirty shorts, socks, shirts, collect the necessary paperwork for the referee and in most cases sweep out the dressing room.

And on the way out he has to gather up the towels, underpants and other articles of clothing forgetful players may have left behind.

When he/she gets home still there is the dirty playing strip to worry about.

At last to bed - a break for a couple of days until the next training night (there are of course many phone calls received in the meantime!)

And finally what about when training is



Central Coast at their recent game at North Power Stadium.

called off or the venue changed due to inclement weather? Who is going to tell the players?

By contrast, team trainers have it easy, or so some people think. They might not have to worry about dirty playing strips, keeping on side with referees on match day but they generally go through the same hell the manager goes through, plus abuse from players when they tell them that they cannot play because of injury.

Managers and trainers; the Coasties have the best. Club head trainer Barry Brown and his assistant Walleen McMinimee and Joe Spiteri, who look after the Under 18 team and Under 21 side, are dedicated to their cause and have heard all the excuses and complaints.

Team managers Bill Northam and Eric Marshall (First Grade), Trevor Hodges (Under 21) and Mark Surridge (Under 18) obviously carry out their duties with utmost professionalism - if they didn't the Coasties would not be having such a successful season.

To Barry, Walleen, Bill, Eric, Joe, Trevor and Mark, on behalf of all the Coasties players, coaches, officials and supporters we sincerely thank you for your efforts this season.

If any team wins honours at the end of the year your dedication will have gone a long way to that success - if nothing comes our way, you are still great guys (and girl).

Any IS readers want to be a team manager?

Heidelberg United Heroes and Highlights with VPL writer Mark Fisher

By Mark Fisher

From the time the Heidelberg Soccer club was founded in 1958 it has built up a reputation as one of the fiercest of cross-town rivals in Australian soccer history.

With South Melbourne Soccer Club forming just a year later in 1959, the scene was set for intense, atmospheric and fiery derbies which became Victorian soccer's entertainment jewels - victory in these encounters not only earned the winner bragging rights, but also the primary focus of Melbourne's numerically huge Greek community.

Yet over time the club built up rivalries with others as well - the encounters against Preston, when both clubs were firmly entrenched in the NSL in the 1980's, earned both clubs' supporters a place in Australian football folklore, such was the passion of both contingents of faithful fans.

In the 42-year history of the club, Heidelberg has had its own share of state league and national league honours. Heidelberg Alexander raced up the divisions in the early Sixties, to become Division 1 Metropolitan champions in 1963 and 1965.

Then it was to be ten years before they tasted state league success again - in 1975, this time as State League Division 1 champions. Two years later, the club joined what was to be the birth of the National Soccer League, and made an instant impact, finishing in third position out of fourteen contenders on a first-

past-the-post basis.

Between 1977 and 1989, an unbroken period for the club in the NSL, Heidelberg made it to three knockout-style NSL Cups, but had to wait until season 1992/3 to win their first - a 2-1 victory over Parramatta Melita at Marconi Stadium.

As the Warriors, Ernie Tapal and Con Boutsianis inspired the club to a gripping 1-0 win over Marconi in the very last NSL Cup, in late 1996.

Yet perhaps the most important victory was the big one - a Grand Final win after barely four years of playing in the top Australian competition.

The star of the show on that occasion was one Gary Cole, now coach of Bentleigh, who was with the 'Bergers in their inaugural season in the NSL and rose to be top goal scorer in the league in 1980 and 1981.

He scored a remarkable hat-trick in the 1980 Grand Final to deliver a stunning 4-0 victory to the Bergers over Sydney City.

Only a year earlier he had managed the same feat in a 3rd round finals match against Brisbane City, with all three goals coming in the space of twelve minutes!

Heidelberg has produced many other outstanding players over the years. In the Eighties former Socceroos Mike Peterson (now coach of St Albans) and Charlie Yankos made a name for themselves down at Olympic Village.

Port Melbourne's coach Peter Tsolakis plied his trade as a forward with Heidelberg,



One of Heidelberg United's greats: Charlie Yankos seen here challenging Sydney Olympic's Kiwi defender Ricki Herbert at Melbourne's Olympic Park.

and was assisted by present-day ABC commentator Alan Hunter and a young John Anastasiadis during those years.

In the last decade some of our best football exports have time at Heidelberg/Collingwood inscribed on their resumes.

Kevin Muscat, the Wolverhampton hard

man and supposedly the most 'disliked' player in the English First Division because of his physical work, played for both the 'Bergers and cross-town rivals Souths before making his move overseas.

Continued on page 24

Spink adds spark to Bulleen's triumph

PORT MELBOURNE SHARKS 1

Mustafa 58.

BULLEEN ZEBRAS 3

Catalano (Frank) 45, Gnjidic 78, 84.

Saturday night at Anderson Reserve, Port Melbourne.

By Mark Fisher

Whilst Bulleen's defence was on-song at Anderson Reserve on what was a mild autumn night, it was their attack that sounded a warning to the rest of the competition that the club is well and truly back from the brink of the abyss.

And who better to fire for a team re-emerging as a title threat, than Bulleen's often dependable Danny Gnjidic, who in combination with the venerable Warren Spink has returned to the form that made him so dangerous last season.

The first half of this match saw flashes of brilliance from Bulleen's strikers, who were unlucky not to register themselves an early

goal. Spink effected a switching play with Gnjidic after twenty minutes of the match had elapsed, and Gnjidic had an

uninhibited and clear view at goal on the left corner of the area.

He sent his shot well wide across the face of goal and over the byline, squandering a chance at testing the goalkeeper.

Blonde striker Damon Collina in the 35th minute offered Port Melbourne an attacking option with a searing run through the centre, yet Mazzini tailed him closely enough so as to put in a tackle just as Collina wound up to shoot from the left edge of the box.

The ball harmlessly dribbled over the byline with Bulleen's Jamie Cooper in goals watching carefully.

Gnjidic seemed to be everywhere in the forward line by the 40th minute, crossing from the left to Berkan Sakaci to set up a chance two

metres in front of the far post. Sakaci's prod amazingly went off the post and then onto the ankle of a defender, but fortunately for the Sharks the ball trickled over the by-line just inches wide the right post.

By now the Zebras had really taken the game up to the home side, and the pressure had to amount to something useful.

A reward for their toil was reaped when Frank Catalano guided a dipping corner to big defender Paul Della Rocca, and he in turn made no mistake nodding downward past Lyras and team-mates either side of him on the goal line.

The lead belonged to the visitors in that shaky last minute before the break.

Port coach Peter Tsolakis refused to make any changes over the half time interval, sweating on his erratic forward line to find weaknesses in what was a tight defensive formation for Bulleen.

It took a passage of succinct one-touch play plus a difficult parry from the Zebra's keeper to bring the Sharks level.

Putting on another burst of speed through the middle, Collina was able to find an unmarked George Tzirtis on the right corner of the area in the 58th minute.

Tzirtis immediately put the ball into the direction of Nick Tsaltas waiting on the opposite side of the box, who fired a low shot into Cooper.

The keeper did well enough to block it out but could do little about the rebound from roughly whence the ball came. A follow-up shot from Mustafa Mustafa propelled the ball past the half-propping goalkeeper and into the lower right corner of the net.

Bulleen then intensified their attacks from the left flank, with Frank Catalano and Warren Spink exploiting space at the expense of Tommy Sonsini and Nick

Palamaras

It was from that direction that Bulleen was able to set up and finish two more goals to earn a deserved victory.

In the 76th minute Danny Gnjidic received a ball from Catalano about 20 metres out from goal, a few metres short of the right corner of the box.

Facing away from his target, he trapped the ball and then turned and shot with his right foot in a flowing movement, picking out the upper left hand corner of the net in the process.

The game was virtually over as a contest in the 84th minute, when a weaving run by Spink from near the by-line on the left presented an opportunity to square the ball to Gnjidic in a much closer position to the goal.

He made no mistake once again, this time shooting lower into the left side of the net.

The final score remained 1-3, which was a fitting outcome for the courageous Zebras.

For Bulleen, the season is getting better as it wears on, whereas for the Sharks surely it couldn't get much worse.

♦ **PORT MELBOURNE:** Lyras, Sonsini, Palamaras, Watson, Pir (Vukosavljevic), Tzirtis, Pappas, Mustafa, Poutakidis (Tsolakis), Tsaltas, Collina (Mihajlovic)

BULLEEN ZEBRAS: Cooper, Tartaglia, Mazzini, Della Rocca, Thomas, Sakaci (Guglielmi), Emsovski, Catalano F (Schwal), Caimakamis (Catalano L), Spink, Gnjidic

Best Players:

- 3 - SPINK (BULLEEN)
- 2 - Gnjidic (Bulleen)
- 1 - Catalano F (Bulleen)

VPL RESULTS

PRESTON LIONS 2

(Kutlesovski 1 (2))

ALTONA EAST PHOENIX 0

FAWKNER BLUES 0

BENTLEIGH GREENS 0

PORT MELB'RNE SHARKS 1

(Mustafa M)

BULLEEN ZEBRAS 3

(Della Rocca P, Gnjidic D (2))

ALTONA MAGIC 2

(Todorovski Z, Angelovski J)

MELBOURNE RAIDERS 0

OAKLEIGH CANNONS 1

(o.g)

ST. ALBANS SAINTS 1

(Dragicevic 1)

RESERVES:

Preston Lions 0 Altona E Phoenix 4

Fawkner Blues 2 Bentleigh Greens 2

Port Melbourne 2 Bulleen Zebras 5

Altona Magic 2 M'bourne Raiders 2

Oakleigh Cannons 5 St. Albans Saints 4

PLAYED MONDAY NIGHT:

Heidelberg United v
Green Gully Cavaliers

FIRST GRADE

GREEN GULLY CAVALIERS

ST. ALBANS SAINTS

BENTLEIGH GREENS

PRESTON LIONS

ALTONA MAGIC

BULLEEN ZEBRAS

ALTONA EAST PHOENIX

FAWKNER BLUES

OAKLEIGH CANNONS

HEIDELBERG UNITED

PORT MELBOURNE SHARKS

MELBOURNE RAIDERS

P W D L F A P

12 9 1 2 26 9 28

13 6 4 3 24 15 22

13 6 4 3 20 13 22

13 5 4 4 18 16 19

13 5 4 4 15 15 19

13 5 3 5 20 21 18

13 5 3 5 14 19 18

13 3 5 5 14 16 14

13 3 5 5 19 26 14

12 4 1 7 19 24 13

13 3 3 7 20 27 12

13 2 5 6 12 20 11

RESERVES

GREEN GULLY CAVALIERS

BENTLEIGH GREENS

ST. ALBANS SAINTS

PORT MELBOURNE SHARKS

ALTONA MAGIC

BULLEEN ZEBRAS

ALTONA EAST PHOENIX

FAWKNER BLUES

PRESTON LIONS

MELBOURNE RAIDERS

OAKLEIGH CANNONS

HEIDELBERG UNITED

P W D L F A P

12 8 2 2 41 15 26

13 8 1 4 42 21 25

13 5 6 2 30 24 21

13 6 3 4 29 27 21

13 5 4 4 31 31 19

13 5 3 5 38 27 18

13 5 2 6 23 26 17

13 4 4 5 27 33 16

13 3 6 4 29 27 15

13 3 5 5 25 38 14

13 3 3 7 17 39 12

12 1 3 8 14 38 6



VICTORIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

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eat well



live well



ROUND FOURTEEN

Saturday 13 May

Alton Magic v Oakleigh Cannons - Paisley Reserve

7.00(First Grade)/5.00 (Reserves)

Sunday 14 May

St Albans v Green Gully Cavaliers - Churchill Reserve

3.00(First Grade)/1.00 (Reserves)

Bentleigh Greens v Preston Lions - Kingston Soccer Complex

3.00(First Grade)/1.00Reserves)

Bulleen Zebras v Fawkner Blues - Venetp. Club

3.00(First Grade)/1.00 (Reserves)

Monday 15 May

Melbourne Raiders v Altona East Phoenix - Epping SS

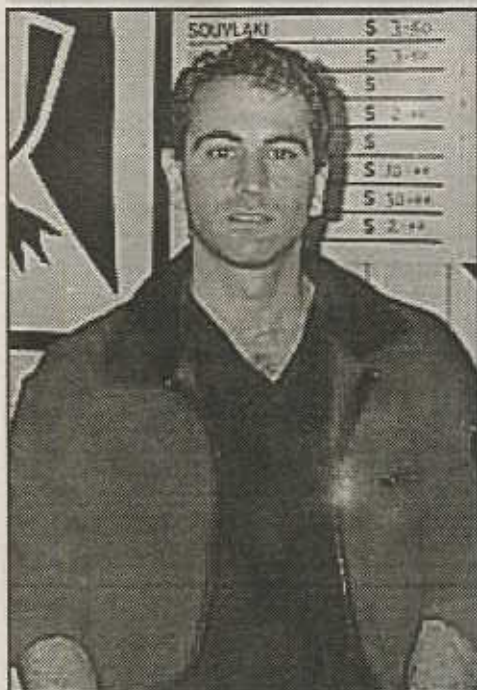
8.15(First Grade)/6.15 (Reserves)

Heidelberg United v Port Melbourne Sharks - Olympic Village

8.15(First Grade)/6.15Reserves)

ALTONA EAST PHOENIX

VPL club with exciting plans and ambition



Michael Tsigeridis, President of Altona East Phoenix in the VPL.

By Markian Jaworsky

MJ: Who are the people behind Altona East and what is the current setup of the juniors?

MT: We have around three hundred plus supporters who attend our matches. We have six junior teams, under 18's down to the under 9's, and the participation of the juniors has increased consistently over the last three years.

All parents of the junior players are advised to become members and help out with club chores, being assistant referees or providing cordial as an example.

MJ: And do the members have a say in any of the decisions made by the club?

MT: The parents are always having their say about what they believe should and shouldn't be done, they are welcome to talk to me, and they do. The parents are very informed.

MJ: What input does the board have on the coaching of the junior teams?

MT: We enforce the idea that all junior players must have their roles and turns in such a manner that they are kept enthusiastic about the sport.

The coaches know this and we do not have any problems with that. At junior levels it doesn't matter if the players are very good or very bad in any sport, they must be kept interested.

Everyone gets a fair go, and that is basically how it works.

MJ: What emphasis is placed on developing the youth at Altona East?

MT: (Pointing to the under 23 team in training) Of the ten players we have out there training, four of those are actually eligible to be playing in our under 18 team.

We are really putting the focus on our youth at the club right now. It's only our second season in the Victorian Premier League, but we have come to a stage where we have to look further ahead than just avoiding relegation.

Last year our only objective was to survive in the top league, which we did and we were rapt, considering it was just our first ever season.

This year I think we can have higher expectations, and that shows (Altona East in third place at time of interview).

However, we need to implement a youth policy now, so that in two to three years time, our younger players will have had the experience and the club can then use that as the core of the squad, and not be forced to buy players.

As you can see we are not the richest club around, we are not a 'Green Gully', we are definitely not a 'Bulleen'.

MJ: How old is the club?

MT: The club was established in 1979, and we are having our 21st celebrations this year.

MJ: The club has a Greek background, does that mean everyone is Greek?

MT: (Again pointing to the under 23 team in training) He's not Greek, he's not Greek... etc. I would have to say, that we would have about a 50% breakdown of Greek and non-Greek players.

MJ: Does that affect the club in anyway?

MT: Ethnic background is not an issue here. We do not say we want Greek people here. There is no match day team selection process based on ethnicity.

Right, we have been able to take advantage of a Greek tradition by forming a communication process in bringing people to the club when we started from scratch, but you will see now in our junior teams how much of a non-Greek club this has become.

MJ: Paisley Reserve consists of four grounds that are shared by two Victorian Premier League Clubs. What are the plans for development?

MT: Development plans are already in place for Paisley Reserve, we are in the process of raising the funds.

Our Council, 'Hobson's Bay' have given us a proposal of matching one in every two dollars given to the development plans by Victorian State Government.

However there are a couple of independent councilors who don't believe the council

should be contributing at all to the development plans of Paisley Reserve, which is really sad.

MJ: This is the same Hobson's Bay council that oversaw the development Australia's best Baseball stadium not far from here?

The same baseball stadium that is no longer being used by the Australian Baseball League, because there aren't anymore teams from Victoria in that league?

The same Hobson's Bay council that boasts an Olympic standard Badminton Arena?

MT: I believe so. Currently we have about 970 registered soccer players in the municipality, and just for argument's sake, they have thrown back this figure of about 1400 registered players that need to be in the municipality.

MJ: In some detail, describe the development plans.

MT: The plans include changing rooms, separate offices for the two resident clubs, kitchen area, entertainment room, coffee shop and a canopy for supporters on match day. It's a half a million dollar project.

MJ: How are you getting by at the moment?

MT: All we have are portables. We don't have enough room for only three desks in there, and how can we seriously maintain a suitable kitchen area of any reasonable standard?

If it wasn't for our cat running around here, we would have problems controlling rodent pests. We cannot continue like this.

MJ: So the council just waters your grass?

MT: No, I do not want to say that the council does nothing for us. In the last ten years we have received some maintenance assistance

from the council but they are not willing to get by behind us any serious development.

We pay our rates, and if it means increasing the rates to help fund development, we are happy to pay.

We put so much into the community, the council must be willing to give a little back.

MJ: What other issues does the club have?

MT: Not many. We need to improve the quality of our main pitch, and get a couple more light towers to light up the four grounds properly for training nights, but those are the only concerns we face at the moment.

MJ: The Victorian Soccer Federation has spent a long time preparing for a summer league, however it has been reported in the press today that they have called the whole thing off. What are your immediate thoughts?

MT: That's the first I have heard of that news. Personally I prefer the game to be played over the winter period, and the news doesn't surprise me.

MJ: And finally what about yourself? You are the new young president on the block, how are you finding that?

MT: Well, I manage to get things done in whatever spare time I have available. Juggle the tasks that need to be done in my own time during the day.

I've been here since day one. I started in the juniors back in 1979, playing for the under 12's. In the last couple of years I got into the committee and I still play.

We have an Old Boys team, for any of the senior players who don't want to move on.



VICTORIA PREMIER LEAGUE

MONDAY NIGHT 15 MAY AT

OLYMPIC VILLAGE

CATALINA STREET, WEST HEIDELBERG

HEIDELBERG

UNITED

PORT MELBOURNE

SHARKS

CLASH OF THE TRADITIONAL RIVALS

COME AND WATCH THE WARRIORS TAME THE SHARKS
AND SEND THEM BACK HOME AS FLAKES!

8.15 (First Grade) 6.15 (Reserves)

This game is proudly brought to you by:



Andrew Young & Associates, Nicholas Antipas Cars

Continued from page 22

Frank Juric starred as the first-choice custodian for Collingwood in 1996/97, and later earned himself a ticket to the Bundesliga and club Bayer Leverkusen.

Andy Vlahos also played with the club before moving to Carlton and then on to Greek powerhouse Panathinaikos.

To the present times, and with pacy ace Alfonso Opazo (see Inside Soccer's exclusive interview next week) scoring 9 goals from twelve matches this season, and with the contributions of Carlos Hermosilla and Leigh Tsoumerkas at the back, the 'Bergers look like consolidating their position within the Victorian Premier League.

Whilst the opportunity to gain some ground on the league leaders is still there mathematically-speaking, no-nonsense coach Jeff Olver, who starred in goals for the club in the Eighties and



Heidelberg coach, the respected former keeper Jeff Olver

early Nineties, may well be content just to keep the club well away from the relegation drop zone.

A mid-table position by season's end would then be a good springboard for the 2001 season campaign, not to mention towards a place in the proposed NSL 2nd Division in 2001/2.

Eagles' loss gives Kings and Jets hope

PREMIER LEAGUE	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Adelaide Blue Eagles	12	9	1	2	34	9	25	28
Croydon Kings	12	9	0	3	33	14	19	27
Modbury	12	9	0	3	18	13	5	27
Port Lion	12	7	1	4	22	14	8	22
Campbelltown City	12	6	1	5	18	21	-3	19
Elizabeth City	12	5	2	5	22	20	2	17
Raiders	12	5	0	7	17	18	-1	15
Adelaide City	12	4	2	6	21	22	-1	14
White City Warriors	12	4	1	7	8	16	-8	13
Cumberland United	12	3	1	8	11	23	-12	10
West Torrens Birkalla	12	2	3	7	12	28	-16	9
Metro Stars	12	2	2	8	13	29	-16	8

STATE LEAGUE	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Olympic FC	12	10	2	0	29	8	21	32
Para Hills Knights	12	7	4	1	32	12	20	25
Salisbury United	12	7	1	4	23	20	3	22
Port Pirie City	12	6	3	3	27	17	10	21
Adelaide Cobras	12	6	2	4	23	18	5	20
Western Strikers	12	4	6	2	22	19	3	18
Northern Demons	12	5	3	4	22	20	2	18
Noarlunga United	12	6	0	6	18	19	-1	18
Enfield City	12	3	4	5	23	25	-2	13
Adelaide Hills	12	2	1	9	15	33	-18	7
Panthers	12	1	1	10	11	32	-21	4
Seaford	12	1	1	10	9	31	-22	4

By Donald Campbell OAM and Margaret Bowden

One shock result this week puts early runaway leader Blue Eagles within easy striking distance of Croydon Kings and Modbury Jets.

John Evans' fifth placed Campbelltown Red Devils defeated the Blue Eagles 2-0 to open up the League, while both Croydon Kings and Modbury Jets had 3-1 wins over rivals White

City Warriors and Adelaide City respectively. In other matches, Raiders defeated Birkalla 2-0, Port Lion defeated Cumberland Foxes 1-0 and Elizabeth City defeated Metro Stars 2-1.

In a game marred by 11 cautions and one red card, the Red Devils turned on an awesome team display to have the league leaders 2-0 down after only 23 minutes, thanks to a strike from Adam Perre and a penalty by Paul Beltrame.

Star of the game was Red Devils young Japanese import Udagawa, who teamed with Beltrame to control the midfield. Frank Sergi, Jovan Dacic and Tony Giannito played solidly for Blue Eagles, but could do nothing to stop the Devils.

Phil Scardigno's Croydon Kings put in another regal performance against the rapidly improving White City Warriors.

Ricky Piotrowski slammed in one of his specialties early, only to see the one goal lead leveled by Bradley Armour, who transferred midweek from the Foxes back to the club where he won the Player of the Year Award.

The game threatened to get a bit fiery, but referee Steve Craggs kept the lid on things with a couple of quick cautions. Young Joel Porter cracked in the Kings' second goal just before half time, and Tosh Deptula sank Kings' 3rd goal after the break.

Duane Gray's Modbury Jets continued to fly high, scoring three goals in the second half to Milan Ivanovic's young Adelaide City side's one.

A lacklustre performance from both sides in the first half was replaced with some exciting football in the second. Jason Trimboli stole the show, cracking in a shot one minute after the break.

Lucas Pantelis replied for City with a long shot, but the Jets went for broke, pressuring City keeper Simon Cecere into a string of brilliant saves. City also put Jets' keeper Robbie Matosevic under the hammer, but like his City counterpart, he put in a brilliant performance.

Mark Yates made it 2-1 for the Jets with a free header at the far post from a corner, then Trimboli finished in style with a swerving 30 metre right foot shot.

Alby Kidd's new look Elizabeth City Rams atoned for last week's loss with a win against Mario Boffa's relegation threatened Metro Stars. With new signing Frank Blazeovic from Port Pirie City in goal, and wily midfielder Mark Brazzale from

Raiders, the Rams looked much more comfortable.

Sam Farncombe headed in the Rams' first goal in the first half and Wade Mango scored the second after the break. The Stars pulled back a goal late in the game through a Jason Pedron penalty.

Mike Barnett's Port Lion Pirates broke their losing streak at the expense of David Leane's out-of-form Cumberland Foxes.

It took until the second half for the Pirates to get on top in this very physical game, in which up-and-coming young referee Paul Cetrangolo reached for the yellow card four times.

Both sides missed open chances until Steve De Giovaniello thumped a superb shot past Foxes' keeper Matt Peace. The Foxes sadly missed their inspirational captain Les Maticsak, out for one game through suspension.

Rocky Aloisi's Raiders continued on their winning way with a 2-0 victory over Charlie Villani's Birkalla. The loss of Mark Brazzale didn't seem to worry the Raiders, Con Georgiou and Bralic scoring in the first half, then the team hanging on in the second to deny Birkalla a goal.

Best for Raiders were Bralic, Morrison and Mignone, and for Birkalla De Lorenzo, Plummer and keeper Marian Kolar.

In the State League the leaders Olympic defeated Adelaide Hills Hawks 1-0 to maintain their seven point lead ahead of Para Hills Knights, who also had an expected 4-0 win over Panthers.

Salisbury United continued their winning streak, defeating Port Pirie City 2-0, while Cobras accounted for Seaford Surfers 2-0 and Western Strikers accounted for Noarlunga Bulldogs 3-1.

The punters had picked Northern Demons to beat Enfield Falcons, but Falcons managed to hold them to a 0-0 draw.

Olympic had to fight all the way to hang on to their one goal lead against a determined Adelaide Hills Hawks. Much stronger on the ball, Olympic dominated the first half. 'Super Sava' Anastasiadis scored the only goal in the 15th minute. His side missed several guilt-edged chances, and had it not been for Hills' keeper Steve Spencer playing a blinder, Olympic would have had quite a few more.

Continued on Page 26

Bill Turner Cup results

ROUND ONE

William Clarke Coll. 2	Normanhurst Boys 1
Newington College 3	Ashfield Boys 0
Emmans College 3	Bidwill 0
James Busny 5	Casula 2
Cabramatta 1(5)	St Johns Park 1(3)
Alstonville 4	Ballina 1
Kingscliff 1(5)	St Josephs Banora Point 1(3)
Lismore 4	Richmond River 0
Toormina 2	John Paul College 1
Mueller 4	Deception Bay 1
Grace Lutheran 9	Southern Cross 1
St Pats Shorncliffe 2	Clontarf Beach 0
St Laurence 6	Ferny Grove 0
Corinda 6	Sunnybank 1
Centenary 3	Macgregor 0
Kelvin Grove 3	Michelton 0

*Penalty scores after drawn games are in brackets

By Nick Guoth

Tuggeranong United would probably feel pleased that they were able to finish up with all the points in their match against Burns FC last Sunday at Wanniasa Oval.

They eventually won 3-0 but Burns inability to finish any of their bagfull of chances early in the second half was their downfall and is surely an area which will be worked on later in the week.

The game started very quietly with both teams in this, the first Tuggeranong Valley derby match for quite some time, feeling each other out.

From the 22 minute mark of the first half, Tuggeranong started to dominate.

A ball out to Loic David was crossed in to Robert Holden who's shot was deflected for a corner kick.

A few minutes later a low through ball by Jeremy Butler into the box was met well by Robert Schroder but his deflection just sailed wide of the post.

Then with 32 minutes down Tuggeranong struck. A scramble just on the edge of the box saw Scott Conlon pick up the ball and turn his defender. His shot from an acute angle slipped inside the near post of the Burns keeper, Jimmy Carr.

With a few minutes left of the half, a long throw by Mark Cerne sent Loic David down the right side and his cross found Scott Conlon. He set himself and sent a solid attempt which beat Carr, but not the crossbar. It bounced down and then out before being cleared.

This was the big wake-up call for Burns and towards the end of the half they began to find their form and dominate possession and chances. The half culminated with Chris Gray's attempt flying over the bar.

Into the second stanza and Burns continued their presence in the opposition half generating chance after chance. Ronny McLeod was at the heart of things doing an enormous amount of work as well as taking all the set plays.

And it was from one of these dead-ball situations that saw Brenton Mikk headed just over after only 8 minutes. Two more and Chris Citowicki headed at Michael Cerne, the keeper for Tuggeranong, instead of to either side.

A few more minutes and a long ball

over the defence found Daniel Byrne. He took the ball into the box only to see his shot saved for a corner by Cerne. Byrne had another chance three minutes later but shot directly at the keeper when he should have done better.

With twenty minutes on the clock past a McLeod free-kick was headed down for Tyson Littlewood but the youngster shot wide when under pressure.

Then Burns were to pay for the pressure. A soft free-kick was given away to the left of the box for Tuggeranong to try and get back into the game.

Scott Conlon sent a rocket towards goal giving Carr problems. He could only parry the ball and Schroder was first to it toe poking the ball under the keeper.

The goal broke the back of the Burns team, given all the pressure they had generated prior to this.

In the 29th minute they put the game away. A cross was not handled well by the defence with Schroder making a nuisance of himself. The ball fell to Marc Conlon who slotted home his shot just inside the far post.

Burns had one more chance to score well into time added on. Peter Thompson released Russell who broke towards goal. He rounded Cerne easily before sending his shot goaward, but Mark Cerne saved his brother clean sheet with a goal-line clearance.

Tuggeranong coach Graeme Plath was worried about the way Burns fought back in the early part of the second half and felt they deserved something at that stage and "that it was only the last 20 minutes that we proved we were the better team out there".

For Burns, Steve Bryant said "I don't know if the boys believe in themselves enough to win games. We had a lot of chances today.

Disappointed, but it's not the end of the world."

In the other games Gungahlin Juventus scored a important win when they defeated Canberra Deakin by 1-0 in the match of the round at Deakin Oval.

It was important to them, not only to keep them on top of the table, but before all the Cosmos and other National League players return to play for teams in the ACT League.

Steve Lazzari was the sole scorer in

the match, but he should have put away an earlier chance when he had an open goal. Deakin pushed hard when they moved forward but lacked the finishing touch when near the penalty area.

Belconnen United thumped Canberra Olympic 7-1 as Marko Perinovic scored a hat-trick at Hawker on Sunday.

Perinovic scored the games first two goals in the 13th and 21st minutes. Both times Daniel Camara gave the final pass.

Camara scored himself in the 26th minute, while Jamie Mauro scored a great individual goal in the 32nd minute.

Mauro beat four defenders in a weaving run up the middle before slotting the ball into the top right corner of the net.

Jason Dunn headed in a corner in the 65th minute to put Belconnen up 5-0.

Seven minutes later Robbie Perinovic put Olympic on the board with a penalty shot.

Three minutes later, Camara scored his second with a shot from the narrowest of angles. Perinovic completed his hat-trick in the 82nd minute.

Results:

PREMIER LEAGUE 1ST GRADE:
Belconnen United 7 Canberra Olympic 1,
Burns FC 0 Tuggeranong United 3,
Canberra Deakin 0 Gungahlin Juventus 1
Premier League Under 23s: Belconnen United 5 Canberra Olympic 0, Burns FC 1 Tuggeranong United 1, Canberra Deakin 4 Gungahlin Juventus 2
PREMIER LEAGUE UNDER 19S:
Belconnen United 3 Canberra Olympic 0, Burns FC 0 Tuggeranong United 13, Canberra Deakin 0 Gungahlin Juventus 3

TABLE:	
Gungahlin Juventus	18
Tuggeranong United	14
Monaro	12
Belconnen United	11
Canberra Deakin	9
Canberra Olympic	8
Capital City Suns	6
Burns FC	3
University of Canberra	3
Weston Creek Royals	2

Lev Osman on his first year at the Kingz



Marconi twice and, as we all know, it's not an easy task over there. The low points would definitely be my injury and the suspensions. Especially getting two red cards this season and not one yellow was also quite strange.

AO: What affect did the ownership issue have on the club?

LO: The affect the ownership issue had on the club was that it really left players, coaches and staff in the lurch. Everyone was unsure if we were going to get paid or whether we were playing the next week.

There was also a lot of negative press towards the Kingz saying that we failed and it was always going to happen. I think we lost some supporters through the hard times.

AO: In what areas did the side fall down? What were the side's strengths?

LO: The team through the season did not string more than two wins in a row. The strength of our team would have had to be, being unpredictable. Week in week out, teams did not know

what to expect and most times being the underdog we come through. I don't think any team in the league took us lightly.

AO: What did you learn from this year?

LO: I think I learnt a lot this year, playing outside of Australia and playing as a professional.

The coaches really made training similar to how it would be in Europe and how much hard work was needed. They really implemented all the knowledge from Europe and pushed us to our limits. I think it improved us all as players.

AO: How was it being coached by the Rufers?

LO: I would have to say being coached by the Rufers was very unusual. They really did not make it easy for players or make it comfortable for us. They would always change the team, it did not matter if we won, played well, or



lost. They said good players can play everywhere and they put players in all positions. I really felt that is why our team was so inconsistent and unpredictable.

AO: The fans are pretty special (pictured below) What message would you like to give them?

LO: The fans in New Zealand are brilliant, I really take my hat off to them. The supporters that stuck by us through the good and bad times were really special to the players.

Towards the end off the season I would have to say our supporters were as good as any other supporter base in the national league.

They even made up songs and they had a verse for every player.

AO: When did you decide to leave the club and why? Are you a free agent?

LO: I decided to leave the club just recently, I have had talks with the club and coach and they have offered me a better deal but I think it is time for me to make a move.

The country is also trying to promote their All Whites, Olympic team and New Zealand

soccer in general. I think that that's great but I still think they're still a long way away from the Aussies. I also thought before coming to New Zealand that the Kingz would be another Perth or Northern Spirit. So I guess the club did not reach my expectations.

I am now a free agent and I plan to either play for a club in Australia or maybe trial overseas. It just depends on what offer I receive.

AO: Here's a free kick: what could you offer a club in the NSL if you joined them?

LO: I still think I have a lot to offer in the national league. I have just completed my fourth season and just notched up my 90th game. So I guess I have got the experience in the league and being a free agent doesn't hurt.

Also being a utility player, playing in defence or midfield, would also make me a good asset to other clubs.

AO: Living in Auckland. How was it and did you settle?

LO: Living in Auckland has been quite an experience, it is very similar to Australia, though. I would say it's like a smaller version of Melbourne. The only problem I did have was all the Kiwis having a grudge over us Aussies. It didn't help when we kept winning everything (GO THE AUSSIES!).

This country is also strange as they are Rugby mad, they all love it over here, I don't know why though.

I settled in very well here, my team mates were easy to get along with and they helped us get by. I still don't think the night clubs will be the same without us though.

AO: What was the media coverage of the Kingz like?

LO: The media coverage took some time to kick off, but when it did it was quite good. Every home game was live throughout NZ and some games in Aussie were also live.

The papers did not give us too much coverage as the Rugby took most of it. But it is always improving and I think it will be much bigger next season.

Aidan Ormond: Lev firstly, how would you sum up this year you have just had with the Kingz?

Levent Osman: Personally this year with the Kingz I'd say has been pretty consistent. But missing three weeks through suspension and the last five games of the season with an ankle injury has disrupted it a bit. But still, to have made 26 appearances this year and playing quite well it's been good.

I also thought with the team we had and also with a bit of luck we could have made the finals.

AO: What were the high points and low points?

LO: Well the high points of the season for me would have to be doing the double on the three big clubs in the national league. Great wins over the reigning champions South Melbourne.

Also beating Olympic twice, both times when they were top of the table and also



Continued from Page 25

The Hills got back into the game in the second half, Andy Kay making sure the Olympic keeper Darien Bauer knew he was on the pitch.

Best players for Olympic were Metaxiotis, Anastasiadis and Bauer. Bets for Hills were Spencer, Slater and Marshall.

Para Hills, without coach Eric Norman, accounted for Panthers with two goals in each half. Eggars scored two, Stockdale one, and the Panthers would have been disheartened to score a TOG for the opposition. Best for Para Hills were Breton, eggars and Talbot, while Best, Kestell and Kontos were standout per-

formers for the Panthers. Eric Norman was forced to retire from coaching during the week due to ill health. Former Elizabeth City coach Harry Bell will take over at the club.

T. Elliott made a goalscoring hero of himself for Salisbury, scoring a goal in each half to destroy early form team Port Pirie City. There is no stopping this Salisbury side now. They are definite title contenders. Best for Salisbury were Hughes, Carberry and Powell.

Port Pirie's best performers were Odontiadis, McGinnes and Amato.

Cobras, another club not given much credit at the start of the season, ensured Seaford remained at the bottom of the table,

the Harpas brothers scoring a goal each. Cobras were one nil up at half time and extended it to two at full time.

Best players for Cobras were Mirza, Marks and Pontikinos. Seaford's best were Stanley, Paris and Connor.

Western Strikers did not have an easy time in defeating Noarlunga Bulldogs.

The Strikers went ahead through G. Lastella on the stroke of half time, but the gritty Bulldogs equalised 20 minutes into the second half when Barry Higham slotted the ball under the keeper. Piekarski and Galanopoulos scored a goal apiece in the last two minutes to give Strikers the points.

Best for Strikers were Leonardi, Capasso and Galanopoulos. Best for Bulldogs were Marsh, Mather and Carozo.

The match between Northern Demons and Enfield Falcons was a lacklustre affair, the 0-0 score line being a true reflection of the game.

Referee Barry Panella reported a very quiet afternoon, with only 3 cautions. The only standout performance on the day came from Falcons' Mark Abrahams.

Their other best players were Moore and Georgiou. Best for Northern Demons were Carrachio, Gaudio and Sailor.

LIVE SATURDAY 13 MAY 7.00PM
C7 SPORT CHANNEL 12

**MARCONI STALLIONS
 V CARLTON**



STALLIONS

- 1 Michael Turnbull
- 2 Chad Gibson
- 3 Mark Babic
- 4
- 5 Dominic Longo
- 6 Pan-Keum Kim
- 7 Christian Care
- 8 Darren McDonald
- 9 Zeljko Babic
- 10 Brad Maloney
- 11 Mike Smith
- 12
- 13 Danny Invincible
- 14 Buddy Farah
- 15 Pierluigi di Gia
- 16
- 17 Francis Awaritefe
- 18 Harry Karl
- 19 Brendan Renaud
- 20 David Aceski
- 21 Paolo Marchesini
- 22 Kris Trajanovski
- 23 Vlado Zoric
- 24 Josala Junior Sauturaga
- 25
- 26 Daniel Severino

CARLTON

- 1 Dean Anastasiadis
- 2 Dave McPherson
- 3 Craig Deans
- 4 Simon Colosimo
- 5 Sean Douglas
- 6 Andrew Marth
- 7 Stuart Slater
- 8 Mark Atkinson
- 9 Alex Moreira
- 10 Lubo Lapsansky
- 11 Archie Thompson
- 12 Mike Conroy
- 13 Steve Martin
- 14 John Markovski
- 15 Con Anthopoulos
- 16 David Terminello
- 17 Joe Tricarico
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21 Andrew Packer
- 22 Angelo Motsiopoulos
- 23 Colin Azzopardi
- 24 Joshua Kennedy
- 25 Daniel Vasilevski
- 26 Steve Horvat



Venue: Marconi Stadium
Saturday 13 May 7.00PM

Head-to-Head: 7
Stallions: 2
Carlton: 4
Draws: 1

Last Week: Stallions 1-1 away draw with Cosmos.
 Carlton 2-1 home win over Wolves.



LIVE SUNDAY 14 MAY 5.00
C7 SPORT CHANNEL 12

**SYDNEY OLYMPIC v
 ADELAIDE CITY FORCE**



OLYMPIC

- 1 Jim Kourtis
- 2 Scott Thomas
- 3 Chris Zoricich
- 4 Peter Tsokenis
- 5 Scott Baillie
- 6 Ante Juric
- 7 Zlatko Arambasic
- 8 Marcus Phillips
- 9 Pablo Cardozo
- 10 Brett Emerton
- 11 Chris Kalantzis
- 12 Sebastian Sinozic
- 13
- 14 Gabriel Mendez
- 15 Lindsay Wilson
- 16 George Goutzoulis
- 17 Paul Kohler
- 18 John Kyriazopoulos
- 19 Nick Carle
- 20 George Bouhoutsos
- 21 Lee Miot
- 22 Pete Zorbas
- 23 Dylan Macallister
- 24 Norman Tome
- 25 Hussein Jomaa
- 26 Alex Duric
- 27 John Perosh
- 30 John Karoubas

FORCE

- 1
- 2 Gianluca Lagati
- 3 Ivan Zelic
- 4
- 5 Alex Tobin
- 6 Carlo Talladira
- 7 Damian Mori
- 8 Carl Veart
- 9 Nick Sabljak
- 10 Aurelio Vidmar
- 11
- 12 Nathan Day
- 13 John Fusco
- 14 Michael Cartwright
- 15 Louis Brain
- 16 Matthew Kemp
- 17 Angelo Costanzo
- 18 Bradley Hassell
- 19 Claudio Pelosi
- 20 Adrian Cagalj
- 21 Dong Ki Kim
- 22 Shane Thompson
- 23 Jonathan Lihou



Venue: Belmore Sports Ground
Sunday 14 May 5.00PM

Head to Head: 47
Olympic: 18
Force: 20
Draws: 9

Last Week: Olympic 3-0 home win over Sydney United.
 Force 3-1 home win over Knights.



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